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Extemporaneous Oratory

For

Professional and Amateur
Speakers

By

James M. Buckley, LL.D.

Fourteenth Thousand

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Exordium

BEFORE entering college I determined to study law, and accordingly took great interest in debate, in attending courts, and in reading accounts of cases. But young men frequently change, and a few years later I had become a minister, and was obliged to make choice among different methods of public speaking. After experiments with all I adopted the extemporaneous, and ever since have systematically practiced and studied this art.

In searching for the excellencies of others I discovered many defects in myself, and while contemplating others' imperfections, saw that some methods might be improved which had been fancied perfect. I discerned that many who thought themselves extemporizers were not so. Under erroneous instruction I fought against the deepest tendencies of my own nature, and wasted energy in the pursuit of fixed ideals.

I found that ancient authors and some comparatively modern (especially FENELON, in his *Dialogues on Eloquence*) had treated the subject more satisfactorily than recent writers. The

monograph of M. BAUTAIN, Vicar General and Professor at the Sorbonne, is admirable, but adapted chiefly to a type of mind in which exquisite sensibility plays the most prominent part.

Several years ago I was invited to lecture upon extemporaneous speaking before theological seminaries and law schools. Various unrevised reports of those lectures were published, some of which inadvertently misrepresented fundamental principles, and placed me in the attitude of practicing and recommending methods which I believe incompatible with a union of accuracy, animation, and ease. On this account I had almost decided to write upon the subject, when I was simultaneously requested to do so by the faculty of a law school and by a committee appointed to prepare a course of study for the ministers of the denomination with which I am connected.

No cast-iron rules can be found in this book, although some of its precepts may be compared to the best steel, which is elastic. Except when moral elements are involved, there is no principle taught which the extemporizer may not sometimes be compelled to violate.

The pervading idea is that whatever aid he derives from study or from teachers, every man must be his own final authority. The reader who follows his mature judgment, where it differs from that of the author, will pay the highest tribute to the purpose of this work.

Quotations have in some instances been introduced to acquaint the reader with books found useful; in others to show that their authors are authority for facts stated; and, wherever possible, to make known that the most competent judges concur in the views herein supported. When necessary to antagonize the teaching of another I have given him the privilege of stating his own views.

While the effort is made to aid orators in every stage of progress to secure the art which is expounded, the character kept steadfastly in view is the young man on the threshold of his career.

When for the first time I read *Rush on the Voice* I was unable to understand more than half of it; ten years later I read it again, and understood two thirds of it. Allowing a considerable period to elapse, I read it the third time, comprehending all and accepting much more than I had

thought reasonable on the second reading. Since much that this work contains is verifiable only by experience, I suggest to the novice that he write upon the margin his opinions and doubts, and at a later period compare with his ripened views the statements which at first he questioned.

Extemporaneous Oratory

CHAPTER I

Oratory

ORATORY is the greatest of arts. It includes the elements of all, and in every age and nation has wielded a more general and potent influence than any other.

Elements.

The voice, susceptible of modulation in tone, pitch, and rhythm; the figure, attitude, and action, together with light and shade, which are the elements of music, sculpture, and painting, are involved in oratory. In the form and voice of the speaker oratory appeals directly to sight and hearing, and to the other senses by representative imagination; as in SHAKESPEARE'S "O, my offense is rank; it smells to heaven;" in MILTON'S repast, "light and choice, of Attic taste;" and TENNYSON'S "touch of a vanished hand." For ordinary effects it may, and for its higher effects it must, appeal to the intellect, the sensibilities, and the deeper emotions; and as it appeals to these, it must employ them, its ultimate object being to influence the will

by convincing the judgment, arousing the conscience, or moving the heart.

Utility. In the youth of the world oratory was the sole means of distributing information. The press in some measure has superseded it in the discharge of this function, but by no means wholly, for in critical times and on momentous themes oratory infuses information with a life which magnifies a thousandfold the power of mere ideas. By oratory the oppressed are roused to revolution and tyrants overthrown; by it, in times of peace, are made known the need and the methods of reform, and the heroic virtue necessary to accomplish them is enkindled, sustained, and guided.

Oratory is the soul of discussion and the unifier of sentiment, by which alone representative governments are maintained. From the humble town meeting to the highest legislative assemblies it is indispensable in the transaction of public business; and by it judges are convinced and juries instructed and persuaded. Lord MACAULAY in his sketch of the career and analysis of the character and gifts of WILLIAM PITT affirms that "Parliamentary government is government by speaking." While he deplores the fact that "that power may exist in the highest degree without judgment, without fortitude, without skill in reading the characters of men or the signs of the times, without any knowledge of the principles of legislation or of political

economy, and without any skill in diplomacy or in the administration of war," his luminous pen portrays its stupendous achievements when fortified by the learning, accomplishments, and patriotism of his hero.

By oratory every form of religion was established and is maintained; in particular, Christianity, whose Founder "spake as never man spake," and whose last commission to his disciples was, "Go, preach!"

To whom necessary.

Acquaintance with the principles of oratory should not be left to clergymen, lawyers, statesmen, professors, lecturers, and politicians, since no one can be sure that there will not come a time when it will be of great advantage to him to possess the ability to speak distinctly, to the purpose, gracefully, and with genuine fire. Those engaged in different trades, professions, and departments of commerce are organized for the protection and promotion of their respective specialties, and practically their associations have become debating societies, reaching conclusions and forming rules which those cannot safely ignore whose business interests are involved.

There is one profession, that of medicine, whose members fill an increasingly important place in civilization, but who, with a few notable exceptions, seldom appear to advantage in public speech.

They are often summoned to testify in courts of justice, where their resources of expression may be

taxed for hours. They are frequently placed on boards of education, upon committees dealing with sanitary conditions, and upon the common councils of cities. In meetings of citizens they are asked for their views of proposals affecting the public health, and if successful in their professional careers, may be associated with the faculties of medical colleges. They are also members of medical associations, city, county, State, and national, where debate is had upon papers read and questions relating to the rights, privileges, or standing of the profession or regulations for the management of the organizations.

Yet for such positions many otherwise qualified are unsuited because they have neglected the study and practice of free expression. For some years it has been the habit of several of the most distinguished members of the profession to deplore this lack and to urge upon medical students the importance of attending to the subject.

Endowment or acquisition.

It is often held that orators, like poets, are born, not made. CICERO explicitly affirms the opposite: "The poet is born such; the orator is made such." Lord CHESTERFIELD, in his letters to his son, declares: "I am not only persuaded by theory, but convinced by my experience, that (supposing a certain degree of common sense) what is called a good speaker is as much a mechanic as a good shoemaker; and that the two trades are equally

to be learned by the same degree of application."*

These are extreme views, for no man could be trained into an effective orator if he were without a spark of genuine fire, although he might become a pleasing speaker. Most persons possess sufficient intelligence and susceptibility to admit of being trained to a high degree of perfection, but few, without special training, have enough of either or both to make orators. Hence it is true that the capability of oratory is born, and the orator made.

Art must supplement nature.

Like every mighty human agency, oratory is capable of being employed for the basest purposes, but it is by the noblest and most disinterested eloquence that the evil wrought by fanatics and demagogues is counteracted.

* Bradshaw's *Letters of Lord Chesterfield*, No. 220.

CHAPTER II

Definition and Explanation

THERE can be no clear thinking nor valuable exchange of thought without a definition and a common understanding of its meaning. Concerning extemporaneous speaking, there exist unusual confusion of mind and diversity of opinion. Much public speaking supposed to be extemporaneous is not so in any sense of the word. Some effective orators compose their sentences without writing, subsequently delivering sermons, lectures, or addresses in the language previously prepared. It is reported of certain men that after the lapse of years they could redeliver unwritten discourses without omission or addition. Such an utterance is in no respect extemporaneous, since there is no radical difference in the mental processes, as regards productiveness during speaking, between the repetition of matter previously written and that which by meditation has been directly recorded in the verbal memory.

Divergent ideas of extemporaneousness.

Rising without previous preparation, without even the selection of a theme, and speaking in public, is unquestionably an extemporaneous performance, but in most instances it does not equal ordinary conversation. It may be described as ex-

hortation or ranting, but not as oratory. Such unpremeditated speaking was all that was implied in the original meaning of the word "extempore:" "Arising from or at or of the time, the occasion; quick, sudden, prompt; and thus opposed to prepared, premeditated, deliberate."* BEN JONSON, HOOKER, Bishop TAYLOR, JOHN LOCKE, BOYLE, SOUTH, ADDISON, and MACAULAY use the word in this way. JONSON says, "A poet—I will challenge him myself presently at extempore." And SHAKESPEARE uses it in a satirical way in "Midsummer Night's Dream:" "'Have you the lion's part written? Pray you, if it be, give it me, for I am slow of study.' 'You may do it extempore, for it is nothing but roaring.'"

Old and new meanings.

A new application of the words "extempore" and "extemporaneous" has come into use within the last half century, and is now recognized in most authoritative dictionaries. Although the speaker may have prepared everything but language and form, if the speech be neither read nor recited, it is classed as extemporaneous.

Unpremeditated, impromptu, or the colloquial off-hand, at present signify what was originally the sole meaning of extempore, as applied to public speech.

Whatever, within certain limitations or under certain definitions, metaphysicians may maintain, practically it is impossible to think without words,

Reciprocal relation of thoughts and words.

*Richardson's English Dictionary, vol. i, p. 743.

and equally so to conceive ideas without nouns and verbs or their equivalents. The researches of HARVEY PEET, LL.D., among the most philosophical ever made, show that before receiving instruction in the use of words or signs the deaf have crude symbols of their own invention for every distinct idea, and think wholly by means of them.* The conclusions of Dr. PEET rest upon thousands of inquiries made in the course of his forty years' experience as superintendent of the New York Institution for the Deaf and Dumb. Similar inductions have been made by those whose specialty is the education of the blind, and the mental methods of those remarkable characters, JULIA BRACE, LAURA BRIDGMAN, and HELEN KELLER, reflect additional light upon this abstruse subject.

Native penetration.

The unlearned and untrained may think as clearly and deeply, within the circle of their powers, as the accomplished; and frequently, on account of freedom from the abstraction or distraction produced by a multiplicity of ideas, they penetrate to the heart of a subject, and reason more shrewdly and correctly than do the educated. It is because of this that many eminent men, among them MOLIÈRE, were in the habit of reading their works to humble people, and regarded such as their most valuable critics.

There can be no preparation for the delivery of

*Observations on the Deaf and Dumb, *N. Amer. Med.-Chir. Rev.*, 1858., etc.

thought without the use of nouns and verbs; and if comparisons of quality of substance or mode of action are to be made, adjectives and adverbs must also pass before the mind's eye. The construction of sentences, paragraphs, sections, or of an entire discourse or book is a much more complex matter, involving the choice of the best word among several, and the fixing of its accidents of mode, tense, person, and number; articles, conjunctions, prepositions, and interjections are also required, and many other elements must receive attention.

Communication of thought.

Yet, though the nouns, verbs, and expletives which contain these ideas are in the minds of the uncultivated, they cannot grammatically express them, and fail as writers and speakers; nevertheless there are exceptional instances in public address where the very errors intensify transient effects. Hence, when such persons reach high positions in the mercantile or political world, as in free countries they frequently do, they need amanuenses or private secretaries to whom they may communicate their nouns, verbs, and qualifying terms, that these may be arranged according to the technical rules of spoken or written discourse.

There are experts who receive large fees for properly expressing in writing the ideas of uneducated politicians and others whose position or am-

bition leads them to speak in public. The greatest of men have not always disdained such assistance. Compositions attributed by history to kings, military commanders of high rank, and, in conspicuous instances, to governors of States and Presidents of the United States, and many of the speeches read or recited in Congress are known to have been prepared in this way.

Basal definition.

The extemporaneous oratory the philosophy of which it is the aim of this work to elucidate is: The delivery, in an arrangement of words, sentences, and paragraphs, entirely the birth of the occasion, of ideas previously conceived and adopted with more or less fullness and precision, together with such thoughts and feelings as may arise and obtain utterance.

To the consciousness of the speaker his own mental state is similar to that of one participating in an animated conversation—there being no effort to recollect, no anticipation of what is to come, but entire absorption in the process of evolving, in correct forms of speech, the thoughts intended to be impressed.

If words, phrases, or sentences which have been previously thought are uttered, they are fresh products of thinking, coming without recollection and without summons of the will. They are not brought forth as crystals from a cabinet, but rise as a stream from an overflowing fountain.

This method is compatible with protracted special preparation; but if there has been much writing, additional meditation of a peculiar kind is necessary, after the manuscript is laid aside, in order to efface utterly the impression which the writing may have made upon the conscious memory. If this be not done, the perturbed mind can neither extemporize nor recite perfectly; and he who is in such a case is of all public speakers most miserable.

A caution.

CHAPTER III

Comparison of Modes—Reading

The orator may read, recite, or speak extemporaneously. Reading and reciting have much in common, but the extempore process radically differs from both. To determine the relative value of these methods the standard must be the best in each kind.

Inferior extemporaneous speaking, in comparison with a badly-composed and feebly-delivered manuscript or recited address, may have the advantage of a more natural use of the voice and the possibility of being roused into unwonted energy by some unforeseen occurrence or unusual impulse; but it is exposed to the danger of unendurable dullness, puerile repetition, and incoherent rambling.

Qualified concession.

If the production is to be published and this use of it be deemed more important than the effect upon the audience, the superiority of reading to extemporizing must be conceded; but in other cases this consideration should be allowed no weight, since the primary object of speaking is to be heard. Nor should this concession be allowed without exceptions, for some of the best extemporizers have attained a beauty and finish of style

which rendered their discourses suitable for publication exactly as delivered. In these rare instances, however, there is reason to suspect that they lost by their precision something of power in delivery, and there is also room for the further suspicion that passages had been thought out and virtually memorized.

Vocal advantages.

The extemporaneous process, in comparison with reading, has the advantage of greater ease and power of vocalization. The voice of the speaker is deeper, stronger, and more flexible, and the effort required to produce it much less. The head being held erect, there is no constriction of the throat, the lungs are fully expanded, and the respiratory muscles are free to perform their functions. Platform reading cannot, with propriety, be called a health-promoting exercise of the vocal organs. Professors of elocution and public readers who are in constant practice, whose reading is reciting, who pass rapidly from grave to gay, who read from tragedies and comedies and dialogues requiring frequent transitions, and who rest during applause, may not find it injurious; but it is indisputable that reading discourses verbatim is not a healthful exercise, while extemporaneous speaking, properly performed, is one of the most beneficial.

John Wesley attributed his long life, among other things, to preaching extemporaneously every

day. CHARLES H. SPURGEON * gives similar testimony to its healthfulness. The clergyman's sore throat is peculiarly the disease of the reader. The exploits performed by many evangelists and by speakers in political campaigns place the question beyond doubt; for no one confined to a manuscript could equal them in audibility and endurance.

Effect upon delivery.

Naturalness, force, and variety of delivery are the characteristics of the extemporizer; the mind, the voice, and every muscle, nerve, and gland employed in the effort acting in sympathy. The perfection of this condition is impossible to the reader. The best extemporizers are graceful, and even a peculiarity which in itself would seem awkward harmonizes with the general movement, not lessening, but often augmenting, power. They are never monotonous, for the same reason that a good converser is never insipid.

The influence of the countenance, especially of the eye, deserves emphasis. The reader loses this in a great degree, since, when intent upon the manuscript, his eye cannot be seen by the audience; the play of his features is lost. When looking away from the paper and repeating a sentence his face cannot light up as does his who speaks directly to the people. The "blood earnestness" of CHALMERS could rise above this disability, but it was a triumph involving some loss of power.

* *Lectures to My Students.*

Complete sympathy with an audience, including the effect of action and reaction, is attained only by the extemporizer; and its effect is incalculable upon the nature which can respond to it. There is no more powerful extraneous intellectual and moral stimulant. WILLIAM PITT'S reply when accused of unduly exciting the people was, "Eloquence is not in the man; it is in the assembly." On one occasion a part of the manuscript of LYMAN BEECHER, founder of the Beecher genus of orators, slipped away from him. A gentleman attempting to return them was met with this exclamation, "Let them alone; they have been a trouble to me all the time; this bottle won't hold the wine of this press."

Reflex influence.

Upon the announcement of the death of President GARFIELD a memorial meeting was held in Exeter Hall, London. JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL, then minister of the United States to the Court of St. James, presided, and read with classic elegance a tribute. Nothing could have been more fitting. It was received with calmness, intellectual interest, and a due sense of its pathos. After another had spoken Bishop SIMPSON, of Philadelphia, Pa., was introduced, and for a few moments spoke with a singular intonation and manner characteristic of him. As he proceeded his voice became tremulous, and there was pathos in his aspect; he stood as one entranced; there came a spontaneous

Memorable illustration.

burst in which he referred to the intimate relations between England and the United States; to the queen, her sore bereavement when Prince ALBERT died, her message of sympathy to Mrs. GARFIELD, and with intense fervor exclaimed, "God bless Queen VICTORIA!" It was so unexpected that the whole audience rose and cheered. Mr. LOWELL appeared perplexed, as if not quite understanding the situation or recognizing the propriety of such an outburst, but as it continued and the people seemed to lose themselves he joined in the demonstration. In the midst of the tumult the orator stood with folded arms, apparently as calm as though he were some fabled god invoking a mighty force.

He placidly resumed, but afterward there were two similar responsive manifestations.

A few days later I said to him, "Bishop, was the paragraph which produced that wonderful result committed?"

"No," he replied; "I will confess to you I was as much surprised as Mr. LOWELL at the effect of my words." Bishop SIMPSON was in that half-trance into which an earnest speaker sometimes falls. The fidelity of the generic descriptions composed long before by OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES was that day confirmed.

The Autocrat on fresh inspiration.

"And so the orator—I do not mean the poor slave of a manuscript who takes his thought

starched and stiffened from its mold, but the impassioned speaker who pours it forth as it flows coruscating from the furnace—the orator only becomes our master at the moment when he himself is surpassed, captured, taken possession of, by a sudden rush of fresh inspiration. How well we know the flash of the eye, the thrill of the voice, which are the signal and the symbol of nascent thought—thought just merging into consciousness, in which condition, as is the case with the chemist's elements, it has a combining force at other times wholly unknown!" *

It must not be supposed that Bishop SIMPSON had neglected preparation. His thoughts in various parts of the address bore the marks of careful premeditation.

Adaptability

A great advantage possessed by a spontaneous speaker is that he can adapt himself to circumstances. If a reader has adequately prepared, and the situation is what he expected it to be, he may achieve a high oratorical triumph; but if the circumstances have materially altered, and he be wholly confined to notes, he is powerless.

* *Mechanism in Thought and Morals*, p. 54.

CHAPTER IV

Reciting

Memorizers may attain extraordinary power. Examples are found in Demosthenes, Massillon, Thomas Guthrie, William Morley Punshon, Edward Everett, George Whitefield—to a considerable extent a reciter—and Daniel Webster, in most of his formal orations. This method is liable to certain defects which cannot be avoided except by an amount of preparatory study and repetition not compatible with frequent appearances before the same audience, unless as the result of labors so great as to threaten premature mental or physical failure.

The eye in eclipse.

Natural expression of the eye is frequently destroyed or obscured during recitation; it turns inward and upward, and a skilled observer can determine whether the speaker is unwinding or weaving his paragraphs. This incipient turning appears when the individual, though but for the fraction of a second, finds his phraseology not at his tongue's end. When the expression of the eye is thus changed one cannot affect his hearers by it, except those who, perceiving the eye in that condition, are so innocent as to imagine that the orator is obtaining inspiration from some mystic source.

An actor does not purpose to address the audience. When not soliloquizing he is attending to what is going on about him on the stage. He addresses only the one to whom he is speaking, who on his part is watching for the word which is his cue. The audience listen and observe as though these proceedings were in real life and the actors unconscious of observation. Hence the expression of the actor's eye is not, ordinarily, one of the principal means of communicating to the audience his sentiments and feelings.

Obstruction of gesture.

The effect upon gesticulation of reciting is unfavorable, since unprepared gestures, to be appropriate, must receive their impulse from the common centers of thought and feeling. But when words have been previously elaborated without gestures the orator must select those suitable, and so impress them upon the memory that they will accompany that which is spoken.

This requires as much study as the actor gives to his part, yet only thus can the reciter fully prepare for his performance. While an occasional oration may be thus composed and rehearsed, and one often repeated may thus be delivered, he who addresses the same audience frequently, or is compelled to do so at short notice, rarely has time for such arduous toil, and is in risk of being mechanical and incongruous.

The contrast in effectiveness between the

efforts of such speakers, when they have had adequate time to prepare and when they have hastily composed and committed a discourse, vividly illustrates the operation of these principles.

Reflex action from the audience, so helpful to the extemporizer, is liable to disturb the declaimer of committed passages. One of the most eminent of those employing this method was constantly fearful of some influence from the assembly which would distract him. He was accustomed to say that he never felt himself fully ready until he could deliver his address without hesitation in an empty house, and never deemed himself out of danger when speaking in public until the audience had heard the last word.

Self-forged chains.

The production of the speaker from memory frequently partakes too much of the nature of a completed fabric. He begins at a high rate of speed before he has established sympathetic relations with his audience, to whom he seems "full of sound and fury." This peculiarity adheres to some who have attained success. Those who listen to them regularly do not notice it, but frequently strangers are amused or perturbed by it until conquered by the orator's real force, intellectual, physical, and moral.

A. Melville Bell upon this subject wisely says: "Repetition from memory requires a very high degree of elocutionary skill to counteract the ten

dency to hurry in delivery; to continuative and indefinite tones; to the drawling, sentential tune, and other mannerisms, as exemplified by unskillful memoriter speakers of all classes, sacred and profane, on the stage, not less than in the pulpit."*

Like the reader, one who speaks absolutely memoriter can take no advantage of an unexpected situation. Although the public mind may be absorbed in a momentous event which has occurred, or is imminent, which the speaker did not contemplate in his preparation, and though a ludicrous or startling circumstance should transpire, he is incapable either of protecting himself from or assisting himself by it. If called upon suddenly, he is weak; and unless his memory be stored with compositions suited to various emergencies, he is compelled to decline or disappoint expectations.

At great cost.

The effort to commit to memory and deliver as written is a severe tax on mind and body, and no galley slave ever worked harder than do most who pursue this method. On this account many who in early life have spoken memoriter, unable to endure the perpetual strain, have resorted to the manuscript. The system has likewise a pernicious effect upon spontaneous intellectual fertility. The noted GEORGE DUFFIELD, of the Presbyterian communion, who was long settled in Detroit, Mich.,

*Address on Sermon Reading and Memoriter Delivery. Edinburgh.

informed me that during a quarter of a century he spoke memoriter, and that after composing a discourse he could commit it to memory in from two to three hours so as to deliver it verbatim, but finding that it diminished the productiveness of his mind, he adopted the method of reading.

Two perilous aids.

A few orators, able to write on the paper and the brain at the same instant, on rising from the completion of their task have been capable of repeating what they had written without the change of a syllable. Such gifts are rare, unless the writing be done with extreme slowness, accompanied by careful meditation upon each word. There is a type of mind that works at fever heat and often under the influence of stimulants, writing up to the moment of delivery, and then reciting with apparent fervor and with substantial adherence to the manuscript. These orators reduce the defects of the process to a minimum, but they do so usually at serious cost. The former class lose in enthusiasm and moving power; the latter pay the price of a profuse expenditure of vitality, besides being extremely liable to fall into the pernicious practice of extemporaneous writing.

A special form of memorizing.

A peculiar form of speaking memoriter is that practiced by those who, having composed every sentence mentally without writing, deliver what has thus been perfected without omissions or addi-

tions. Because less mechanical this mode is preferable to taking the forms into the mind through the eye after having placed them upon the paper. But it has several defects, the most important of which are that it is didactic in style and monotonous in delivery; hence it does not usually kindle enthusiasm or move the passions, although it may please, instruct, and convince. It is best adapted to an assembly of scholars, the lectures of a professor, and the delivery of arguments before courts of appeal.

An inestimable advantage.

The extemporizer has a capital advantage over the reader and the reciter, in that at all times he is ready to expound, defend, illustrate, or enforce his opinions. He can speak in the shop or in the drawing room as readily as upon the rostrum, in courts of justice, halls of legislation, or in the pulpit; and every conversation in private the better prepares him for what may be demanded of him in public. Whereas many a profound and elegant writer is mute without his manuscript, and many an impressive and convincing declaimer is unable, in conversation, to vindicate or elucidate his sentiments.

CHAPTER V

Mixed Methods

THE combining of reading and reciting in the same address is an improvement upon either alone, since when the speaker turns from his manuscript and recites a passage it may have the effect of an outburst. Yet if the recited matter be similar in style to the other parts, the discriminating soon discern that it is merely reading without the book. As a rule, reading is the best manner of presenting matter which is written to be read, and of which in any event the greater part must be read.

Possible improvement on reading exclusively.

Reading in part and extemporizing in part are more effective than the use of the manuscript exclusively. This was one of the methods of that many-sided man, HENRY WARD BEECHER. Yet ordinarily the attempt is hazardous if the orator be a good extemporaneous speaker, and disastrous if he be not. It encounters the perils of length and repetition. On several occasions I saw Mr. BEECHER turn away and with marvelous power speak extemporaneously, then return to the manuscript and repeat the substance of what he had delivered with so much force. Before the repetition became offensively noticeable, under the influence of another inspiration he would so fascinate his hear-

ers as to make them forget that he had a manuscript. Without genius this would have been impossible.

Unless the orator has mastered the invaluable arts of composing in the style in which the best extemporizers speak, and reading as though he were speaking, there is a marked difference between what is read and what is improvised. A few fine samples of this work have appeared (particularly in the United States) in several professions, so that the orations, if published as read, would be supposed to have been delivered extemporaneously. In such a case a person having his memory so trained as not to repeat what he had read might extemporize without a marked transition of style, and turn to the manuscript for his peroration.

One of the most common and injurious effects of this method is that the speaker, enjoying his own oratory, will continue until he has the appearance of having run down, and then, with a blank expression of countenance, be compelled to fly for refuge to his notes. As eloquence consists in weaving a spell over the assembly, a disappearance of expression from a speaker's face for even a second may cause a relaxation of his grasp, difficult, perhaps impossible, for him to renew.

A joint use of the extemporaneous and the recitative has marked advantages, and is to be commended to those who cannot trust themselves

Promising but uncertain.

wholly to the former. But it is extremely difficult to adjust it gracefully and forcefully. Transitions of style are usually obvious, extemporized portions being spoken more swiftly or more slowly than the recited. Emphasis and accent are different, and gesticulation undergoes a noticeable change. The reciter is prone to proceed more rapidly than when he extemporizes; at other times, according to the strength of his memory or his excitability when uttering words not previously prepared, he may speak more slowly. A lawyer delivered a Fourth of July oration in preparation for which he had composed perhaps ten epigrams and half as many paragraphs, some consisting of at least three times that number of sentences, and had committed these to memory, expecting to extemporize the connective tissue. What he had learned he recited perfectly; what he extemporized he delivered under slight embarrassment, and his course resembled that of a man crossing a bridge some of the planks of which were weak and others strong. He fairly leaped when he came to one of his committed paragraphs, and it was obvious that he rejoiced in spirit; but more than once his hesitation and awkwardness were pitiable.

Undue exhibition of mental machinery.

The highest gift of extemporization is usually like a spirited steed, which cannot be driven double, or like a jealous maiden, who will not brook divided attentions.

CHAPTER VI

Comparative Danger of Failure

It is pertinent to inquire whether the extemporizer be not more liable to fail than he who pursues one of the other methods.

The memorizer's ever-present danger.

That the best extemporizer may fail must be acknowledged, since for their effects all the organs employed depend upon change of particles; but if master of the art, he is much less liable to do so than the memorizer. Of the intellectual faculties memory—considered as servant of the will—is the most treacherous because most subject to impairment. It is most dependent upon physical conditions; its decline is usually coincident with the earliest, and frequently the unrecognized, approaches of old age; its failure is often the first symptom of that characteristic malady of a high civilization—neurasthenia; and extreme bodily or mental fatigue temporarily paralyzes it. Whoever commits a written composition to memory does so chiefly either by sound or sight, although a few nearly equally combine both methods. If by sight, one has a memorial image of the page and of the words upon the page as he recites. Should there be the slightest failure of memory, he cannot continue unless he can catch a mental glimpse of that

page. Hence many after rewriting a discourse find that, if the character of the paper has been changed and the relation of sentences to the lines has been modified, they have to recommit the entire discourse. Others make much use of the page, but learn by reading and speaking aloud and maintain their fluency by sound, so that the real stimulator of their minds is the sound of the last word. Therefore the rate of speed must be quite uniform. An unusual pause from any cause may completely confuse them.

Of all failures those of famous memorizing preachers have sometimes been the most hopeless and pitiful. I knew one of them to meet with a disaster in this way, which led him forever to renounce public speaking. The renowned French orator, Bourdaloue, often preached with his eyes partly or wholly shut, lest he should see something which would cause him to forget.

The reader's pitfalls.

The possessor of a well-written manuscript, the contents of which are appropriate to the situation, cannot utterly fail, provided he does not encounter foul air, unfavorable acoustics, or imperfect light. Manuscripts, however, may be lost, stolen, accidentally left at home, or in a trunk which has gone astray.

A clergyman of New York had prepared with greatest care a farewell sermon. It was completed on Saturday afternoon, and leaving it upon the

table, he went forth for relaxation. On his return it had disappeared. The brownstone house in which he lived was in the suburbs, and in the vacant lots adjacent to it goats had free range. Looking out of the open window, with dismay he beheld one of those undiscriminating gourmands in the act of devouring the last page of his manuscript. It did not console him to be told that the goat might be expected to give "the sincere milk of the word."

A Baptist minister, proposing to exchange with the pastor of a neighboring Presbyterian church, selected four of his discourses and laid them upon the study table to be examined upon his return from a pastoral call. He made the choice, and the next morning ascended the Presbyterian pulpit, and at the fit time began to read. In a little while, to his horror, he found himself in the midst of a denunciation of infant baptism, but he had read so much that it was impossible to make a change. Pausing, he said: "I trust that the congregation will not suppose me capable of taking advantage of a pulpit exchange to attack one of its cherished tenets. I did not think when selecting this discourse that it contained such a passage as this, but I must ask you to allow me to read to the conclusion of it, for I am sure that something more suited to the occasion will reward your indulgence." After reading a few paragraphs he es-

Embarrassing position.

caped from the inappropriate theme and led the people out of their perplexity into green pastures and beside still waters. Inquiry elicited the fact that the maid, while sweeping, had raised the windows, and a breeze had scattered the leaves of these four discourses, which were written upon paper of two different sizes. She had gathered and classified them by shape, and the passage of infant baptism thus became a part of the one which he had chosen.

Dr. Park's reminiscence.

When delivering a course of lectures upon this subject at Andover (Mass.) Theological Seminary I passed an evening with Professor EDWARDS A. PARK, who informed me that an incident of which he was cognizant had caused him to urge upon students the mastery of the extemporaneous method.

The members of a local Congregational association came together for one of the regular meetings. A minister had been appointed to preach, but owing to a difficulty of the throat he was unable to fulfill the engagement; information of his disqualification did not arrive until the congregation had assembled. The committee went in succession to nearly every member of the association, hoping to secure a substitute. Some had no manuscripts with them, others none that were suitable, others none with which they were so familiar as to be able to serve at short notice; and so, from

one cause or another, all declined. They were about to dismiss the congregation, when some one noticed a neighboring Methodist preacher; the situation being explained to him, he consented to preach.

"Whether," said Professor PARK, "he intended to satirize the dependence of Congregational ministers upon manuscripts I do not know, but he ascended the pulpit and delivered a sound and discriminating discourse from the text, 'Then the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil, for our lamps are gone out.'"

So numerous are the dangers of those who depend wholly upon reading that one of the most celebrated of them confessed that he never felt quite at ease until he had reconnoitered the ground.

Greater security of the extemporizer.

A public speaker proficient in the art of extemporizing, and never voluntarily neglecting preparation, seldom or never fails; should he do so, it is from causes which would make success by any method impossible. Few successful jury lawyers, who attend strictly to the duties of their profession, meet with disaster, and the best extemporaneous preachers are among the most reliable. Wherever they go they carry their acquisitions, their force of abstract thought, their calm reliance upon the laws of association, and the certainty that, if while they are musing the fire burns, they will be able to speak with their tongues. They know, further,

that if, unhappily, their emotions are not stirred, they will still be able to elaborate thought in a lucid and instructive manner.

The genuine extemporizer is never exactly the same on two occasions. He may frequently discuss the same subject, but he cannot repeat sermons or speeches. He will always be moved, if not by the emotion which is produced by the operation of a divine afflatus, by that which is inherent in this form of mental and physical action. If he addresses scholars, and is himself a man of culture, by a reflex influence he will in style be elevated to their height. If he speaks to colliers, he may without conscious effort so speak that they will hear gladly because they will understand him and feel him.

Intuitive adaptation.

I doubt whether even to the reader should be conceded greater security, for when he might be too ill to read the extemporizer might reach, and under such circumstances often has reached, his highest altitude.

CHAPTER VII

General Preparation

Every extemporaneous address is the product of the whole man—mind, heart, voice—every supporting and expressing organ contributing in varying degrees of energy.

If there be thought only, the impulse to speak will be wanting; if there be feeling only, the sole products must be exclamations and gestures; and though there be thought and feeling, in the absence of language the result must be pantomime.

Comparative importance of general and special preparation.

Relatively to a particular public effort general preparation is more necessary to the extemporizer than to the reader or the reciter; and special preparation more important to the reader, who must prepare a manuscript, and to the reciter, who must not only prepare his words, but so deeply impress them upon his memory that no external or internal distraction can cause him to omit or falter.

An extemporaneous address is an emergency in every form of activity which can affect thought, emotion, language, and expression. The grade of the effort rises or falls according to the normal strength and unimpeded exercise of the faculties, and to the character of the instruments provided for their use.

Neither law books, commentaries, cyclopedias, dictionaries, nor works of particular authors in art, literature, theology, or science can be consulted by the extemporizer while speaking, but they may be leisurely examined by him who is preparing to read or recite. The former must aim to be an animate cyclopedia with reference to those subjects on which he presumes to speak, and must have the power of criticising the facts, principles, and expressions which seek utterance, rejecting the doubtful, the indelicate, the inaccurate, and summoning on the instant words which, if fitly spoken, shall be as "apples of gold in pictures of silver."

Language and thought.

It is frequently asserted that a speaker should attend primarily to thought, and that then language may be trusted to take care of itself. This is true with respect to a particular effort about to be made; but since, with the possible exceptions previously noted, there can be no thought without mental root words or signs, and every word, the meaning of which is understood, deposits a thought in the mind at the same instant that it imbeds itself in the brain, the acquisition of language is the acquisition of ideas and facts under such circumstances that ever afterward the thought will suggest the word and the word the thought.

Therefore, in securing a general preparation for extemporaneous oratory language precedes the intentional accumulation of thought.

CHAPTER VIII

Uses of Language

Vehicle of thought.

THE primary use of language is to express thought. The saying is attributed to TALLEYRAND that "a tongue was given to man in order that he might conceal his thought;" but the only way in which a man can conceal thought by the use of the tongue is by the utterance of false thought. Even in that case the purpose of words is to express thought which, though false to the man who utters it, is intended to seem true to the man who hears it.

Revealer of emotion.

A secondary, but in modern Anglo-Saxon civilization fundamental, use of language is to express feeling, to do which one may make choice among several methods. The simplest is to state his feelings; affirm that he is glad or sad, angry or afraid. Or he may employ exclamations which in their root forms are common to people of every kindred, tribe, and tongue, and which the heart of human nature will interpret.

A refined and often the most impressive way of making one's feelings known is merely to describe them.

When JOHN WESLEY promulgated his peculiar view of the higher life various names were speed-

ily attached to it, such as "Perfection," "Christian perfection," "Entire sanctification," "The higher life," and such cant phrases as "The second blessing" or "The having attained." This was displeasing to WESLEY, who instructed his votaries not to give any name to the blessing. "Avoid," said he, "all magnificent, pompous words; indeed, you need give it no general name—neither perfection, sanctification, the second blessing, nor the having attained. Rather speak of the things which God hath wrought for you."

Another method is to portray the situation and permit human nature, which answers to itself "as in water face answereth to face," to infer the condition.

A pioneer missionary, who afterward rose to a position of world-wide influence, was, during his absence from home, bereaved of a daughter who was fatally burned. She had always been first to welcome him when he returned from long missionary journeys. Speaking of it to an assembly, he told how she used to hasten to greet him, and tremulously said, "I asked for my daughter, and they showed me a handful of ashes." Such simplicity and pathos made far deeper impression than could have resulted from the most elaborate rhetorical delineation.

Expression of thought and feeling compared.

A radical difference exists between the effect of words in the communication of thought and

their effect in the expression of feeling. If one has made known an idea, it is in the possession of his audience. He knows that he has uttered it, and if he possesses the oratorical instinct, discerns that they understand. To reiterate may be permitted once or endured twice, but a speaker will be contemned who is perceived to be diluting his thought or repeating his words.

Exasperating repetition.

It is not so with the expression of feeling. One may affirm that he has reason to be angry; as he affirms this he becomes more angry, and if his auditors sympathize with him, their indignation is increased. If there be common cause, he may repeat until he approaches a crisis of emotion. Under such conditions there is no perception of repetition in the speaker's own consciousness or in that of the assembly, for they are fused into one mind and one heart. This peculiarity is illustrated in political campaigns, religious revivals, and in time of war. When a high state of feeling is excited, provided the speaker expresses his own feelings and those of the people, and so long as yet more feeling is aroused or that which exists is not checked, it matters little what words are uttered. A stenographer taking down what is said on such extraordinary occasions will discover afterward nothing sufficient to account for the effect. Often official reporters become absorbed in the universal contagion and are unable to record

the words, or if they make the attempt, to interpret their own signs.

Subordinate to personality.

A speaker addressed the Reichstag in a most effective manner, and BISMARCK, noticing one of his acquaintances weeping, made a somewhat satirical remark to him, receiving the reply, "You have no heart." The next morning, when a verbatim report of that speech appeared, BISMARCK took it to his friend, and said, "Now, will you point out to me the passage which would have melted me to tears if I had what you call a heart?" The man eagerly took the paper, but on reading it acknowledged that the speech was reported correctly, yet confessed that it did not seem to him then as it did the day before.

Verbal wiles.

Language can be used as an adornment of thought, and it may be so used in the absence of sense or in direct contradiction of it. Much genuine poetry is incapable of literal interpretation without being reduced to absurdity. This accounts for many erroneous interpretations of the Holy Scriptures. There remain those who believe that the figures in the Book of Revelation are literally true, notwithstanding the fact that in parts of that book explicit statements are made of their symbolical character. The poverty of human language is such that the grandest ideas require figurative utterances, and the Church sings of "the saints' secure abode beyond the bounds of time

and space," and "looks forward to that heavenly place" with glorious hope.

The rhythm of poetry sometimes obscures the fact that sense is contradicted. A poem which opposed reason in every figure was recited so beautifully that hardly anyone in the audience discerned its utter nonsense:

> "'Tis sweet to roam when morning's light
> Resounds across the glen;
> When the laughing lights of the woodbine bright
> Haunt the ethereal fen;
> When at noon the bloodshot moon
> Is bathed in crumbling dew,
> And the wolf rings out his glittering shout.
> To-whit, to-whit, to-whoo."

Senseless phraseology.

He is fortunate or unobservant who has not learned that some orators of fame have delighted their auditors with passages destitute of meaning. A minister, widely known in New England, thus addressed an assembly of twelve hundred: "Often, beloved friends, in my meditations have I tried to fancy the exact location of that blest abode to which, after the vicissitudes of this earthly life, we all hope to come. And one evening as I sat gazing with rapture upon the most splendid setting sun which, as I thought, I had ever witnessed, I seemed to hear a whisper, sweetly, softly, saying, 'Heaven is back, far back, of the celestial hills that circumscribe the precincts of the eternal sphere.'"

The audience received this geographical statement with expressions of delight and rapturous hope, and one more enthusiastic than others, or less restrained by the revelation, ejaculated. "Glory." But what had the would-be seer affirmed? Heaven is back—a simple conception. Far back—the conception becomes slightly complex, but easily comprehended. Far back of the celestial hills—lofty mountain ranges bounded the horizon where this rhapsody was uttered and the mind hastened on in search of the climax. Heaven is back, far back, of the celestial hills that circumscribe—this almost revealed "the gates ajar;" it is a clear boundary line. That circumscribe the precincts—the heart stands still. That circumscribe the precincts of the eternal—that is, the heavenly—sphere.

Translated into plain English: Heaven is far back of what is a long distance in front of it. This was all; yet it was delightful to hear; the voice of the speaker was mellifluous, and his expression of countenance that of one rapt.

Extemporizers cannot seek ornaments.

Doubtless he who intends to extemporize hopes to make a temperate use of the ornamental, but while speaking he cannot turn aside for flowers or diamonds. If the current of his thoughts and feelings conducts him where flowers bloom or jewels sparkle, he may take them up, but it is possible that a fragment of granite will follow

a sapphire, a sunflower a rose, and the root of a tree a graceful vine. His speech is rather like the diversified luxuriousness of a semi-tropical region, where tropical flowers bloom side by side with those of the temperate zone, with an occasional specimen of growth indigenous in regions beyond the Arctic circle. All that he can hope for is that the granite will be genuine, the flower perfect of its kind, and that no soil will cling to the root.

CHAPTER IX

Physiological Basis of Speech

THE earlier phrenologists assumed the existence of an organ of language, and professed ability to determine its relative size.

Is there an organ of language?

I was examined by O. S. FOWLER on two occasions, with an interval of eight years, and was mortified to be informed that my organ of language is small, and that I should be embarrassed through life on account of difficulty in finding words to express ideas. The diagnosis and prognosis were so interesting that I requested the examiner to write them for me, which he did. On the second occasion, not recognizing me as the individual whom he had previously examined, though again referring to my defect, he suggested that I might derive some aid in expression from mental activity, which would enable an "inferior organ of language" to do more than ordinary work, "as a small engine with an unusual pressure of steam might do more work than a larger engine with less steam."

On my relating this circumstance to Dr. OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES he responded, "As well might you undertake to tell by the knobs on a fireproof safe the denomination and amount of money

inside as to tell by the bumps on a man's head what are his characteristics."

Within the last forty years astonishing progress has been made in the study of the anatomy, physiology, and pathology of the brain, and within two decades a flood of light has been shed upon its relation to memory in the revival and combination of words.

Light shed on normal by abnormal.

In hospitals for the mentally diseased can be found many cases of *aphasia*, a condition in which there is partial or complete loss either of the expression or the comprehension of the conventional signs of language; these not springing from a defect in any of the external organs or nerves, but from a difficulty in the cortical centers of the brain. There are many forms of this disease. In some there is an inability to execute the movements of the mouth, the muscles not being paralyzed, though not coordinated. There are cases of *agraphia*, in which, when complete, there is an inability to write spontaneously or from dictation, or to copy any letter or word; not as a result of the disease known as writer's cramp, but of some deep-seated difficulty in the brain. Some aphasics can write correctly, but cannot speak; others can speak, but are unable to write. The name *amnesia* is given to another malady which appears sometimes in a simple loss of memory of words. Again the patient may be unable to understand spoken

words, or the defect may include only those written or printed.

There are those who have lost the power of communicating ideas in the proper words, while others can utter the words, but cannot frame them grammatically. Still others cannot arrange words in properly connected sentences; others produce the words, but with an abnormal, strangely perplexing slowness of speech, while some pour forth many words in such a manner as to express no meaning. These diseases can exist without being accompanied by illusion, delusion, or hallucination, and they have appeared in masters of their native tongue, either in writing or speaking, and occasionally in those who have been masters of both writing and speaking.

Origin of these maladies.

The dependence of all these upon the state of the brain has been demonstrated by various experiments and by post-mortem examinations.

Professor H. Charlton Bastian, M.D., F.R.S., Censor of the Royal College of Physicians of London, delivered, beginning April 1, 1897, a series of lectures, which have been published in *The Lancet*, on "Some Problems in Connection with Aphasia and Other Speech Defects." They are based upon and illustrate the present state of scientific knowledge concerning the faculty of articulate language. His opening paragraph is:

"The modern interest in and development of

knowledge concerning aphasia and other speech defects date from the publication of certain memoirs by BROCA, some six and thirty years since, when he attempted to localize what he termed the 'faculty of articulate language' in a limited convolutional region of the left cerebral hemisphere. The publication of his cases and conclusions formed the starting point for a whole new series of investigations, whose result has been a remarkable development in our knowledge of the localization of functions in the cerebral cortex, while the discussions to which these investigations have given rise have materially helped to lead to a better understanding of the working of the complex cerebral mechanism needed for the carrying on of speech and thought. We are thus at the present day capable of dealing with the subject of speech defects from a much broader basis of discovered facts, as well as with a greater critical insight, than was at all possible at, or even long after, the time when BROCA wrote his famous memoir. Very much, however, remains to be discovered before the many differences of opinion that exist concerning obscure and complicated points in connection with the nature and exact mode of the production of speech defects are likely to be set at rest."

Broca's discoveries.

Professor BASTIAN states that, though he cannot accept the hypothesis of a complete topographical distinctness of the several sensory centers in the

cerebral hemispheres, he considers it clear that the cortex must contain certain sets of structurally related cell and fiber mechanisms, whose activity is associated with one or with another of the several kinds of sensory endowment. From a consideration of "the extremely important part that words, either spoken or written, play in our intellectual life, and the manner in which they are interwoven with all thought processes," he holds that "it is highly probable that most important sections of the auditory and visual sensory centers are devoted to the reception, and, secondly, to the revival in thought, of impressions of words; and for convenience of reference it is permissible to speak of these operations as auditory and visual word centers respectively."

In his first lecture he discusses the revival of words for speech, shows it to be a very complex process, and analyzes the mental operation and the physical in reading aloud and in writing from dictation.

Summary of Prof. Bastian's investigations.

The substance of the views of Dr. BASTIAN is that there are two centers of kinæsthetic type—that is, of sensations having a quality whereby one is aware of one's positions and movements, especially those of the automatic type—a quality distinct from the muscular sense. One of these centers is related to articulation, and is named by him the *glosso-kinæsthetic center;* and the other is related to

the movements connected with writing, and named the *chiro-kinæsthetic center*.

Of the location of the former there is little doubt, the place assigned to it being in the foot of the third frontal and the inferior part of the ascending frontal convolutions of the brain. Concerning the location of the other center, BASTIAN admits much more uncertainty, though he has an opinion upon the subject. But besides these are the auditory word center, and the visual word center, devoted to the reception and to the revival in thought of impressions of words. The existence of these is generally recognized, though the position in the brain which they respectively occupy is a matter of some uncertainty.

Centers admitted. Location unsettled.

He holds, also, that besides these four centers there must be connecting fibers, and maintains that lesions relating to speech defects are to be looked for in the word centers, in the commissures connecting them, in the fibers uniting the two kinæsthetic centers to their related motor centers, and in the motor centers themselves.

Although, when an object makes an impression on the brain, it strikes first on the perception center to which it is naturally related, to prevent misunderstanding BASTIAN emphasizes the fact that "It immediately radiates so as to impinge upon functionally related structures, all this taking place so rapidly that the several excitations are practically

simultaneous, and so the combined effects are fused into one single perceptive act."

The value of these studies in speech defects is in their contribution to a full understanding of the normal methods of producing perfect speech.

French authorities.

DEJERINE, a famous French authority, denies the existence of a separate writing speech center, as distinct from the ordinary motor centers for the movements of the hand, maintaining that no case has yet been recorded of pure *agraphia* without other speech defects, and no undoubted case has been placed on record in which a lesion of the supposed writing speech center alone has produced *agraphia.*

CHARCOT, the late French specialist on diseases of the brain, assumes the existence of a center for articulate language, which he believes to be divided into subcenters—a visual for words and an auditory for words, indicating respectively the route by which words enter the brain, and corresponding to these a motor center of spoken, and a motor center of written, language. All speech defects originating in the brain he explains in harmony with these distinctions.

Bramwell's conclusions.

Dr. BRAMWELL, a high English authority, proceeds upon the assumption, and furnishes instances to prove that the action of the motor writing center is, for the most part, under the direct control of the visual speech center; but the existence of a

separate writing center is assumed by him and supposed to be close to speech center.*

In support of this view he brings forward cases of "word blindness," in which the patient is unable to write spontaneously—that is, from within as the result of stimulation from the visible speech center—yet the power of writing to dictation is preserved. In such cases it is reasonable to suppose that there is a direct connection between the auditory speech center and the motor writing center. He holds that in persons who are accustomed to write much, and especially in those who write to dictation, it is probable that the motor writing speech center may be thrown into action either by the visual speech center or by the auditory speech center—that is, whether the person sees or hears what he is to write. He argues, contrary to the usually accepted opinion, that when the nervous impulses are excited the act of writing passes directly from the visual speech center to the writing center, and not, as is usually supposed, indirectly through the motor vocal speech center.

His grounds.

Dr. Bramwell also claims that while the leading or driving speech center is in the left hemisphere of the brain this does not show that the corresponding center in the right hemisphere is inert and has no speech function; and he adduces cases to show that when the left center is disturbed by

*Dr. Byrom Bramwell's Lectures, London *Lancet*, March 20, 1897.

disease the right has been found capable of being trained to take up and carry on the function. It is held by most authorities that in the case of left-handed persons the right hemisphere of the brain contains the driving speech and writing centers.

Griesinger's analysis.

On this subject GRIESINGER, a learned German investigator, says: "A leading characteristic of all severe cases of idiocy is the complete absence of speech, so that not even the attempt is ever made, or speech so very imperfect as to be called 'idiotic dumbness' (not depending upon want of hearing). It depends upon want of ideas, or want of reflex action from the perceptive to the motor faculties and the mechanism of speech; the first have nothing to say, the second have 'no desire to speak.' . . . . The relations of speech are so interwoven with the whole process of mental development, and so necessary to the education and intellectual advancement, that the classification of idiots according to their capability of speaking (generally into three degrees) is one of the best that can be established." *

Facts accessible to all.

Phenomena within the range of common observation, especially the changes that take place in advanced years with respect to the power of speech, confirm in a striking manner the hypotheses of biologists upon this subject, and an analogy

*Griesinger on Mental Diseases, p. 370.

can be traced between the effects of brain degeneration in men and in sub-animals.

The gray parrot, the most intelligent of its species, lives to a great age. Authentic cases of their passing sixty years are adduced. According to LE VAILLANT, one which had lived in the family of MR. MENICK HUYSER, at Amsterdam, for thirty-two years had previously passed forty-one with that gentleman's uncle, who bequeathed it to his nephew. When LE VAILLANT saw it the bird, having lost its sight and memory, had lapsed into a sort of lethargic condition, and was fed at intervals with biscuit dipped in Madeira. In the days of its vigor it used to speak with distinctness, repeat many sentences, fetch its master's slippers, call the servants, and so forth. At the age of sixty its memory began to fail, and instead of acquiring new phrases it began very perceptibly to lose those which it had learned, and to intermix, in a discordant manner, the words of its former language. Similar, though less pronounced, cases have been seen in green parrots, trained bullfinches, and mocking birds.

Senile dementia.

In 1896 the following communication appeared in the *Evening Post*, of New York:

Vagaries of memory.

"*To the Editor of the Evening Post:*

"SIR: In your issue of November 2 you have an article entitled 'Vagaries of the Memory,' which

reminds me forcibly of an instance in my own family.

"My mother, a sister of General MEADE, was born in Spain, and lived there until she was four years old, at which time her parents returned to this country and settled in Philadelphia. For some years Spanish was the only language spoken in the family; but when old enough my mother and her sisters were placed at Madame SÉGOING'S boarding school, which in the early part of the century was one of the most famous schools in the country. There she finished her education, and throughout her life had perfect control of the French language. The Spanish, however, she entirely forgot. Now for my 'instance.'

The first shall be last.

"My mother's last illness was tedious, her mind becoming gradually weakened; but long after she had ceased to speak English she would talk fluently in French. Then there came an interval toward the close of her life when she did not speak at all; but the last few words of all were Spanish.

"M. B. C.

"Perth Amboy, N. J., November 3."

Works on the relation of the brain to the intellectual faculties and upon comparative physiology contain many similar cases.

If it be true, as is now generally held by leading biologists and anatomists, and as the facts herein

presented seem to prove, that speaking and writing depend upon complex mechanism imbedded in the very structure of the brain, important conclusions must follow, relating to the best forms of practice having in view the attainment of the greatest facility in speaking and writing, with the least expenditure of vital force, and the maintenance and improvement of the original power of speech.

Practical value of these inductions.

Some of these conclusions will be stated and further illustrated, and their relation to these physiological and pathological facts and principles pointed out, but the subject is at present so involved, so many investigators are at work upon it, and so much remains undiscovered that it would not contribute to the utility of this treatise to endeavor to support such conclusions other than by tests admitting of observation, self-inspection, and experiment by those who desire to perfect themselves in extemporaneous oratory.

CHAPTER X

Factors in Evolution of Speech

Mental motion.

TURNING from the physiological basis of the power of language to practical tests of the faculty orally to express thought and feeling, it is evident that whatever the method by which language has been introduced into the mind, rate of mental motion is a controlling factor in producing facility in its use. If two persons, mentally and physically equal, were to describe a panorama of the cities of the world, the first, well acquainted with history and geography, would recognize each picture and describe it in appropriate language. Hours might glide away without a moment's hesitation by the speaker or any sense of weariness in those who looked and listened.

The other appears before a similar audience with the same panorama, but it is unrolled too slowly. The second picture comes so tardily that, failing to recognize it, he begins by saying, "I am now to speak to you of St. Paul's—I beg pardon, I mean Westminster Abbey." He apologizes, stating that "it is the Parliament Houses which at the corner appear much like the Abbey," and so goes on. Equal in gifts and acquirements to his predecessor, he is unable to speak without hesitation, contra-

diction, and repetition because of the slow rate at which the pictures pass before him.

When a panorama is employed ideas are evoked from the speaker's memory by the figures upon the canvas, and during ordinary public speaking the ideas originate from an internal stimulus; the rapidity with which they are presented to the mind's eye produces a similar effect upon their exhibition in words.

It is obvious that, in like manner, there may be two men equal in all particulars except in this, that the mind of one moves with rapidity and that of the other slowly. The one, therefore, will be a fluent, the other a hesitating or drawling, speaker. This difference is often illustrated by a single orator who, in beginning, finds it difficult to speak easily, hesitates in the choice of words, stammers, pauses long, but as he proceeds grows eloquent.

Clearness of vision.

Vividness of conception is another element in facility of speech. Imagine two panoramas—one in which the pictures are imperfectly executed, some being mere daubs or incomplete; the other composed of masterpieces. Whatever the intellectual ability or mental activity of an interpreter, repetition, explanation, qualification, and slow progress will characterize the utterances of him who explains the former. The well-executed work will make interesting a speaker of even ordinary gifts. A fatal defect of many minds is that

they see nothing clearly, and begin speaking before they know precisely what they mean to say. Others perceive all things clearly; and one having this power, though of slow mind, may speak more coherently and fluently than another who, without lucidity of thought, possesses greater animation.

Verbal memory.

The ability to recall words differs greatly in different persons. Relative to language there are two kinds of memory. There is the recollection of words regardless of their meaning, as when the pupil commits a table of Latin exceptions. This form of memory obviously depends more upon the physical organs than does any other mental achievement. A woman lived in New England who was utterly destitute of reflective faculty; she was almost an idiot, yet learned to read, and spent from ten to fifteen hours daily reading books and papers without deriving the least idea of their meaning. Such was her memory of words that at the age of sixty she was able, in spelling matches, to surpass the brightest young people of the country. As unemotional as a phonograph, she would spell any word that was given. The only way to confound her was to propound words from scientific dictionaries.

Unique power of Blind Tom.

The phenomenon known to the world as Blind Tom, in addition to his marvelous musical genius, in his case principally a species of memory, possessed a power of this kind not so generally known.

I heard him deliver a speech of Senator DOUGLAS's, whom he had heard, with absolute fidelity to the original in words and surprising similarity in declamatory style.

Professor ADDISON HOGUE, of Washington and Lee University, has recently communicated to the public an instructive experience:

In the spring of 1891 he was teaching in the State University at Oxford, Miss., and was boarding at the hotel in which BLIND TOM and his manager had rooms. After referring to the fact that TOM is not totally blind Professor HOGUE says: "Another discovery was that he was not altogether the idiot I had heard he was. After his musical exhibition was over I went up to talk to him, in company with our professor of physics, who wanted to see whether TOM's memory for sounds was retentive for other than musical sounds. So I repeated to TOM the imperfect active of a Greek verb. To our great surprise TOM looked at me and said, somewhat stammeringly, 'Th-th-at's Greek.' We were informed that he could tell many of the modern languages in the same way, and in his room at the hotel he repeated the whole of the Lord's Prayer in Greek with perfect accuracy."

One-sided development.

At the Earlswood Asylum for Idiots, in England, I examined a number who were capable of learning words in this way, but incapable of comprehending their meaning.

Double grasp of memory.

Another form of memory is the recollection of words with their meanings. This involves reflection and a mastery of the idea in the word. Many who could not recollect Latin exceptions never forget a word that has conveyed an idea to their minds. Some who receive ideas through words and retain the ideas find difficulty in calling the words for expression. A meager vocabulary has a tendency to impede speech and to render necessary the frequent employment of the same word.

The susceptibility of being stimulated by words, thoughts, and things, depending upon the "laws of association," varies in strength in different individuals. By it things invisible are associated with things visible to such an extent that no one can foresee to what anything heard, seen, tasted, smelled, felt, or thought will lead.

This susceptibility is remarkably responsive to words, and in some minds it exerts such an influence that the mention of any idea-bearing word will instantly suggest all the important occasions in which they have known it to be used; the passages in the Scriptures, in SHAKESPEARE, in BACON'S essays, or in laws, commentaries, and legal contests, according to their tastes or professions, in which that word occupies a conspicuous place. In others the adherence of association is so weak that stratagems are necessary to enable them to recollect words or things.

CHAPTER XI

Syllabic Suggestion

A PENETRATING analysis of the joint action of mental and physical faculties in spoken language discloses a subtle tendency which once recognized renders many things easy to be understood that otherwise would be inexplicable. I term it the law of syllabic suggestion. When one has uttered a syllable, that very syllable, by its reflex action upon the mind, may determine the next word he will utter; and if other causes are in operation, which last uttered syllable is liable to be one of the strongest among them. I have often tested this property of the mind, and have no doubt that when extemporizing and wholly absorbed in the process, very frequently, if there be more than one word that would express my idea, the last syllable or the last word uttered will by its sound decide its successor.

Children as extemporizers.

An interesting illustration of this law is furnished by the plays of children before they have acquired a sufficient vocabulary. Using a few of the syllables acquired by imitation, they talk and sing together, whatever the languages of their kindred, in much the same simple forms of meaningless words, gradually dropping the jargon as they learn words with intelligible signification.

A recent illustration was communicated to me by the wife of a missionary in Burmah. The family live in a mission station among a number of different peoples who speak Burmese, English, Tamil, and Hindi. She has a little girl two years and ten months old who is very fond of singing, doing so in family prayers, while playing, and often while walking along the road. One day she sang in a happy but very loud manner. Her mother listened and could not understand the words; they were not Burmese, English, Tamil, or Hindi. So she said to the child, "In what language are you singing?"

In a tone expressing surprise at her mother's ignorance the child answered, "Why, that is God's language; he knows it," and gleefully went on with her singing.

Her song was a mixture of syllables from all the languages she had ever heard, and some spontaneously produced under the law of syllabic suggestion. I doubt not that many a heathen child has manufactured a language in the same way, and perhaps characterized it by the name of some household god.

The strange case of Albert Le Baron.

The proceedings of the English Society for Psychical Research, part 31, December, 1896, contain an account of ALBERT LE BARON, a literary man, whose vocal organs, when he gave himself permission, would utter, involuntarily, unintelligible vocal expressions. His will could both initiate

and arrest them; make them go fast or slow; and he could sing or speak them. He came under the observation of Professor William James, of Harvard University, who tried in vain to make him believe that there was nothing of importance in the phenomena. Professor James had previously met a young woman whose vocal organs would articulate nonsense syllables with the greatest volubility and animation of expression, without any apparent fatigue, and she was able to cease at the behest of her will. This young woman and the friends with whom she stayed, Professor James declares, seemed sincere in their belief that this must be a religious miracle identical with "speaking with tongues," recorded in Corinthians. But the phonetic elements of her speech were palpably English.

Earlier experience.

Mr. Le Baron was anxious to find proof that his performances were involuntary reproductions of some ancient or remote tongue. His statement is that at certain seances "an entirely new and strange psycho-automatic force shook through him like a gust of fierce wind through a tree." His mouth made automatic movements, "till [he writes] in a few seconds I was distinctly conscious of another's voice—unearthly, awful, loud, weird —bursting through the woodland from my own lips with the despairing words, 'O, my people.'"

He says that one of the "clairvoyants" present positively affirmed that phantasms of ancient Egyptian sages stood over him. Subsequent to this on many occasions he delivered himself of various forms of speech in English, such as "I have heard the roar of cities! I have heard the music of the woodlands! I have heard the tears of the nations as they fell! I have heard the songs of the nations as they rose! I have heard the roar of the death of the man who was slain in battle! I have heard the shout of victory! I have heard the new word, and I have heard the old word!"

Birth of unknown tongues.

At last, September 30, 1894, he burst forth in unknown tongues. His "psycho-automatism" gave him translation *viva voce* as well as by automatic chirography. Here is a sentence from the unknown tongue: "*Intellete te intellute. Bule te skuru te siute amkoton.*" The translation of this is said to be, "The book of the past is not the book of the love; it is the song of the sadness."

In attempting to explain these foreign tongues the subject of the phenomena invented nine theories, the last of which is that these "consonantal and vowel combinations and their intuitive vocal adjustments may be startling scientific hints of mental force latent in everybody, and which, if studied, generalized, verified, systemized, and seriously investigated by philosophers, might prove of incalculable benefit to the human race, which

could find no encouragement for expression in the nineteenth century, because of the fierce, mocking intolerance of the conservative dogmas of the age."

The true explanation.

There are latent forces, automatic in their nature, which when started will produce language of this sort *ad infinitum;* and in certain temperaments of unstable, nervous equilibrium they will pass beyond the control of the will. But these forces are at the foundation of the power of speech.

As chaplain of a hospital for the insane, and of late years one of a board of managers of an institution containing twelve hundred patients, I have frequently seen persons in this condition automatically speaking discordant English, or sometimes a melange of several languages. When trance speakers became common in spiritualism I attended many of their meetings for purposes of investigation, and listened to noted "mediums" haranguing in unknown tongues. Summoning to my aid an expert in various languages, I found that in every case where the medium was of unmixed English descent the phonetic elements were wholly those of that language; and where the medium's native tongue was other than that, and he had learned to speak English fluently, not only its root sounds, but those of his own, were discernible. In no case did any "unknown" tongue contain a recurring root sound not recognizable as belonging to some known tongue.

Nevertheless I was perplexed to find among the "mediums" an apparently honest woman who showed no signs of mental derangement, yet spoke in unknown tongues, both in prose and poetry. I perceived that she always spoke rhythmically, and wondering what there might be in the automatic action of the brain that could produce such phenomena, I repaired to a secluded spot and began to utter words without the slightest thought as to what they should be, and the most surprising combinations poured forth, some absurd, others containing valuable and apparently novel ideas and clear discriminations.

Personal experiments.

In order to start the automatism I then manufactured two or three words without sense, and a flow began exerting a powerful reflex influence, furnishing material as fast as I could speak in words, not one of which was English, Latin, Greek, or any other language with which I was familiar, but all were composed of the root elements of the English language.

Pursuing this experiment I gave examples to President E. O. Haven, of the University of Michigan, and discovered that a little practice would enable me to compose automatically in any meter.

It then remained to ascertain whether by indirect influence this semi-involuntary action could be applied to rhyme, and I found that—not by thinking within, but by simply perceiving what

came to my ear from my lips—I automatically produced, in the ordinary meters, rhyme in an unknown tongue. Neither of the syllables nor the rhymes had I any conception before hearing them. The spiritualists, however, refused this rational and natural explanation, preferring to believe in their alleged "controls."

Mr. F. H. MYERS, a prominent member of the English Society of Psychical Research, in discussing this case, says that in the few instances in which he has heard these public addresses under supposed inspiration he felt sure that the speaker was in full possession of his or her ordinary consciousness. But he thinks it very probable that speeches may sometimes be made genuinely in a trance state, and the trance be a mere self-hypnotization. Speaking of LE BARON'S case, he says that it was "a subliminal uprush of absolutely meaningless matter;" and judiciously remarks that "EDWARD IRVING'S unavoidable ignorance of the phenomena of automatism landed him and his flock first in a natural mistake, and at last in obstinate credulity, and spoiled the close of a noble and high career."

A conceit not yet out of date

IRVING, CARLYLE'S friend, mistook for inspiration the automatic motion of his own mind and that of his followers, and upon the basis of it founded practically a new sect.

There is nothing in this action except the opera-

A law of universal operation.

tion of the law of spontaneous syllabic suggestion. For the impulse to speak is of necessity automatic, and the succession of words, though controllable by the will sufficiently to admit of conscious, rational communication of thought and feeling, and of repression when speaking is deemed inexpedient, must ever remain largely automatic; otherwise there would have to be a special will effort for each word, and the phenomena of conversation, properly so called, and of extemporaneous oratory, would be impossible.

Relation to alliteration.

This activity of the auditory and visual sensory centers, and of the speaking and writing motor centers, affects also written composition, and probably exerted in all forms of oratory an unconscious influence on alliteration, once so popular, but in prose now generally contemned.

I heard a Scotch minister of extraordinary reputation for eloquence declare "That at the day of doom the sinner would be dismissed to disaster, desolation, damnation, and destruction."

Syllabic suggestion can be relied upon to assist in maintaining the flow of speech, but the tendency to alliteration and mere physiological selection inherent in it must be restrained.

CHAPTER XII

Words and Their Proper Use

Accuracy essential.

Words must be employed in their true sense, otherwise the uneducated will be misled, the learned offended, and the speaker, if suspected of ignorance or carelessness, will lose the confidence of his hearers.

The extemporizer must incorporate words and their precise meaning with his mental stock. During an address self-criticism is possible only to a limited degree, and should there be but a single word erroneously assimilated, when the time arrives that this word as understood by him expresses his idea, unconscious of the blunder he will utter it. The vital importance of this point appears from the fact that words when once acquired and frequently articulated are eradicated with difficulty.

A vocabulary of a thousand words, correctly understood, is preferable to one of five thousand, even though four fifths of them are properly used, if a part be misconceived. Many have no power of intelligent selection, frequently using words correctly, and by means of them truly expressing their thoughts and feelings; but having grasped many words incorrectly, they are liable at any moment to fall into error.

It is related that COLERIDGE, when near one of the Falls of the Clyde, viewed the scene, and questioned within himself what word would best describe it; after reflection he selected "majestic." At that moment a gentleman, accompanied by his wife, approached the former, exclaiming, "It is very majestic!" COLERIDGE arose and said, "Sir, permit me to congratulate you; I contemplated this scene for some time before I could determine the proper word to characterize it, but you have a more penetrating mind than I, for you came and without a moment's thought have exactly described it."

"Yes, sir," replied the gentleman; "I say it is very majestic; it is sublime; it is beautiful; it is grand; it is picturesque"—"Aye, added the lady; "it is the prettiest thing I ever saw."

Must be transcripts of thought.

Words should also exactly express the thought. It is not enough that terms be used in their true sense; the speaker must mean what the word signifies. Most differences of opinion in theology result from the fact that the disputants use words having fixed meaning, one accepting this, the other supposing that he does, but shrinking from or eluding the significance when it is pressed upon him. Thus two friends disputed about faith till the *odium theologicum* became so intense that one said, "There is no use arguing with such an obstinate man, but if you wish to see my views expressed clearly and fully, you will find them in

—— —— pamphlet, published anonymously." "Why," exclaimed the other, in great surprise, "I wrote that myself!"

Must be intelligible to the listener.

The meaning of the word must be understood by the hearers. If an auditor be compelled to consider what a speaker means, at that instant the grasp of the oration upon his mind is relaxed, and it may be difficult for him to comprehend what the speaker is saying when he has settled the meaning of what he was saying. A speaker not understood can but mystify, and he who mystifies will weary. The ignorant may stare a while, and wonder how a man could acquire such a knowledge of "learned words of thundering sound," but they will tire of that and go elsewhere.

Grammatical arrangement.

It is necessary that the address should be grammatical. There are, indeed, celebrated orators known to be ignorant of the grammar of their mother tongue, who command respect because of extraordinary intellectual or moral power, but even they would not be permanently desired by a refined assembly, although the members thereof individually might follow them when they speak occasionally, whether in pulpits, in courts, or public meetings.

It is safe for the orator to speak ungrammatically only when the audience has become so absorbed as to be unable to criticise; then he should not check flow of thought. Should critics notice an

unusual expression, they are aware that in the torrent of feeling any mistake that one ordinarily correct may make is not the result of ignorance.

Professor Beers relates that a stenographer once proposed to Henry Ward Beecher that he be allowed extra pay for reporting Mr. Beecher's sermons in consideration of correcting the grammatical errors. "And how many errors did you find in this discourse of mine?" asked the great preacher. "Just two hundred and sixteen." "Young man," said Mr. Beecher, solemnly, "when the English language gets in my way it doesn't stand a chance." Whether the young man exaggerated, or supposed some passages ungrammatical which were merely colloquial, cannot now be ascertained, but it is a fact that Mr. Beecher in impassioned speech uttered many unparsable expressions, and this is the case with nearly every great orator who speaks in any degree extemporaneously. The price of literary perfection is the suppression of passion.

Characteristic composure.

On the other hand, many magnificent passages are pronounced by orators of high grade, who under strong emotion attain a grammatical accuracy beyond their powers as writers. The late Abraham D. Merrill, of New England, uttered extemporaneously a discourse one hour in length, which was faultless from the grammatical point of view. It was a prose poem delivered with unction. For

forty-five minutes I resisted its power so as to be able to observe critically.

It is a tradition that Bishop HEDDING endeavored to induce him to study grammar, and that he undertook it for a few weeks, but then said that he could learn grammar better on his knees in prayer than he could from that dead book.

The orator should invariably speak grammatically when he is cool, for by that means he will indirectly control his style when absorbed.

Variety in length desirable.

A due proportion of short and long words is necessary. If all are short, the oration will be fragmentary, and afford little room for inflection or for genuine rhythm. Although by the rising or falling inflection, or by drawling, a word of one syllable can be made to express very different ideas, it is difficult to construct a sentence of such words in prose and make proper use of inflection. Words of two syllables are easily inflected. By the proper use of monosyllables the substance of an oration requiring an hour can be reduced to an essay readily pronounced in ten minutes. For the sake of inflection and rhythm, and the opportunity of developing the full strength of mighty voices, together, doubtless, with a natural tendency to ostentation, many speakers are inclined to use polysyllabic words. This is a serious error; it weakens the style, renders the delivery bombastic, produces little effect on a cultivated audience; and a continuous

discourse consisting chiefly of long words delivered with their corresponding tone has the fatal defect of exerting a soporific influence.

The most effective style is that which contains a sufficiency of long words to produce an impression by their inflection and continuous flow; and short ones which, according to position, will have the effect of an electric shock or an epigrammatic sparkle. Dr. SKINNER, of high renown in the city of New York half a century ago, was unable to use short words. Impressed with the necessity of addressing the Sunday school, which was then becoming popular and promised to be of great usefulness, he consented to make an address, and began thus: "The Westminster Catechism is an admirable syllabus of Christian doctrine." The superintendent gently intimated to him that the children could not understand him, upon which he said: "Your superintendent says you cannot understand me. I will explain. Syllabus, my dear children, is synonymous with synopsis."

A poem, an argument, a tribute.

So many in J. ADDISON ALEXANDER's time seemed to act upon the assumption that short words lack strength that he wrote this marvelous eulogium of the short word:

"Think not that strength lies in the big round word,
Or that the brief and plain must needs be weak.
To whom can this be true who once has heard
The cry for help—the tongue that all men speak

When want, or woe, or fear, is in the throat;
  So that each word gasped out is like a shriek
Pressed from the sore heart, or like a strange, wild note
  Sung by some fay or fiend? There is a strength
Which dies when stretched too far or spun too fine;
  Which has more weight than breadth, more depth than
    length.
Let but this force of thought and speech be mine;
  And he that will may take the sleek, fat phrase
Which glows and burns not, though it gleam and shine;
  Light, but not heat; a flash, but not a blaze.

"Nor is it mere strength that the short word boasts;
  It serves of more than fight or storm to tell—
The roar of waves that dash on rock-bound coasts,
  The crash of tall trees when the wild winds swell,
The roar of guns, the groans of men that die
  On blood-stained fields. It has a voice as well
For them that far off on their sick beds lie,
  For them that weep, for them that mourn the dead,
For them that laugh and dance and clap the hand;
  To joy's quick step, as well as grief's slow tread,
The sweet plain words we learned at first keep time,
And though the theme be sad, or gay, or grand,
  With each, with all these may be made to chime
  In thought, or speech, or song, or rhyme."

Legal tenders everywhere

This short composition contains nearly two hundred distinct words, themselves a most valuable addition to an orator's vocabulary, especially in that most difficult part of all orations—the pathetic.

To affect the emotions words of one or two

Emotional power of short words.

syllables are of far greater power than others. Home, mother, father, brother, sister, friend, gift, hope, love, fear, joy, are the words that we heard and learned in the most impressible period of life, and are the most deeply imbedded in the brain cells. Each in itself is a picture and a history.

Detention upon thought checks emotion. Intellection is a desiccating process. The light of the understanding is a "high and dry light." These words and all of this class deaden the mind less than others. Long words tend to make and keep the nature cool. A young minister prepared with greatest care a discourse in a bookish style on the sufferings of the early Christians. It produced no effect. For a while the audience listened with calm attention, and then exhibited signs of restlessness. He had hoped by that discourse to lead some in the congregation to seek the same sustaining power which enabled those martyrs joyfully to endure hardships. Perceiving that he was failing to accomplish his object, he laid aside his essay and said, "We must suffer as also must those whom we love, and, like martyrs, we must all needs die." He then spoke so simply and beautifully of the trials, sorrows, and bereavements of all that several yielded to his persuasions.

This incident was narrated to me by a cultivated gentleman, who was so charmed with the power of simple words as to recommend to

ministers to avoid references to history and to confine themselves chiefly to the simpler methods which proved so successful.

Another view.

It is possible to account for the young man's failure on another hypothesis. His bookish style necessitated a didactic delivery. Had he described the sufferings of the martyrs in language suited to affect the heart, neither the lapse of time since the events nor the special historical references would have prevented the result at which he aimed. I heard Father "Tom" Burke, the renowned Dominican friar, when he was replying to a lecture by the historian Froude, and had occasion to describe the sufferings of the Irish heroes of a century agone, while reading the history and commenting upon it, arouse a tempest of emotion. His most striking outburst, consisting in large part of Latin and Greek derivatives, culminated in this brief apostrophe: "Shade of O'Connell, arise and vindicate thy native land!"

The natural and feeling description, in words fitly chosen, of a genuinely pathetic scene delivered by one who receives the entire confidence of his listeners, can render them oblivious to the conditions of time and space, and their hearts will throb in sympathy with sorrows felt in the earliest ages and remotest parts of the world as quickly as to the sufferings of the preceding day.

CHAPTER XIII

Enriching the Vocabulary

No one is born with a vocabulary. By slow degrees it is built up, but since undesirable words are added and words unused slip away, unless it is constantly pruned and improved the memory will be so meagerly supplied as to compel wearisome and debilitating repetitions. The most effective means of enlarging the store is the reading and close study of the best books.

The Christian Scriptures.

The Bible, which contains nearly six thousand of the most significant and expressive words, is the richest mine. I refer to King James's version;—the revised, invaluable as giving new shades of meaning, shedding light upon dark passages, and substituting a correct for an incorrect rendering, is, in the character of its English, inferior to the old. In studying King James's version it is necessary to note words that are obsolete or obsolescent, so as not to allow them to impress themselves upon the mind except as such words, lest they should subsequently appear in speech.

Such study of the Bible is as useful to the lawyer as to the clergyman. Erskine and Webster, Abraham Lincoln and his opponent, Stephen A. Douglas—in truth, almost all lawyers of emi-

nence in England and the United States have exhibited their indebtedness to the Bible, and many of them have acknowledged it not only because it is a part of the law of every Christian nation, whether recognized as such or not, but because of its influence upon their style. Such was its effect upon WEBSTER that one of his biographers draws the conclusion "that the young man who would be a writer that will be read, or an orator whom people will hear, should study the English Bible."

The Bard of Avon.

Next in importance to the Bible are the works of SHAKESPEARE, equally valuable for the number of distinct words which they contain and their application to every period and vicissitude of individual, social, and political life.

Professor ALEXANDER BAIN, when treating the subject of language, its uses and the modes of acquiring it, says: "A man's vocabulary will show with whom he has kept company, what books he has studied, what departments he knows; it will reveal, farther, his predominating tastes, emotions, or likings. We see in MILTON, for example, his peculiar erudition and his strong fascination for whatever was large, lofty, vast, powerful, or sublime. In SHAKESPEARE the adhesiveness for language as such was so great that it seemed to include every species of terms in nearly equal proportions. Only a very narrow examination enables

us to detect his preferences, or his lines of study, and veins of more special interest." *

"Only to the commonplace is anything commonplace."

An habitual student of Shakespearean literature, I have reached the conclusion that the knowledge and powers of language displayed by SHAKESPEARE are to be attributed in a large degree to his placing in the mouths of his characters language acquired from contemporary or prior productions, or from conversations with specialists in trades and professions; frequently practically transferring bodily, without quotation marks, and at other times with but slight modifications, what he needed to furnish his characters with suitable expressions. The sublime conceptions, the penetrating discriminations, were his, but it is improbable that in conversation or composition he would have been able, uttering his own sentiments, to draw upon the resources, either of knowledge or language, which are displayed in his dramatic writings. I must believe, therefore, that the profound general and extensive particular knowledge of the separate professions predicated of him has been carried further than the facts would justify. However this may be, all concede that, although in the realms of fancy, logic, philosophy, poetry, pathos, oratory, morals, religion, and the supernatural, words, usual and unusual, are often seen in unexpected situations, they rarely fail to justify their

* *Mental and Moral Science*, Alexander Bain, A. M., p. 117, paragraph 52.

appearance by their intimate relation to the needs and wishes, the appetites, passions, yearnings, hopes and fears, the weaknesses and the strength of universal humanity.

John Bunyan's style.

Next to SHAKESPEARE, I would place the works of JOHN BUNYAN. The best of these is *Pilgrim's Progress*, but his sermons are not to be despised as a means of attaining a mastery of the most expressive English. Long after I had read *Pilgrim's Progress* several times, and had formed this opinion of its worth, I was gratified to come upon a passage in MACAULAY which gives the authority of his name to the recommendation, and, more important even than that, presents the grounds upon which his judgment is founded:

"The style of BUNYAN is delightful to every reader and invaluable as a study to every person who wishes to obtain a wide command over the English language. His vocabulary is the vocabulary of the common people. There is not an expression, if we except a few terms of theology, which would puzzle the rudest peasant. We have observed several pages which do not contain a single word of more than two syllables. Yet no writer has said more exactly what he wanted to say. For magnificence, for pathos, for vehement exhortation, for subtle disquisition, for every purpose of the poet, the orator, and the divine, this

homely dialect, this dialect of plain workingmen, was sufficient."

Milton and Addison.

Most cultivated men are familiar with MILTON'S poetry; the study of his prose is equally remunerative. The works of EDMUND BURKE should on no account be neglected. To read critically ADDISON'S papers in the *Spectator* is helpful. One may ask a hundred times whether he could substitute a better word than that which ADDISON employs to express the same idea, without finding a single instance in which it could have been done.

More modern authors.

But since literary style and the language of the common people are constantly changing, it will not suffice to confine one's attention to works written several hundred years ago. The best English authors of the present generation should be studied. Two American writers are especially useful—WASHINGTON IRVING and NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE. The former excels in lucid narration; the latter, in giving a mysterious power to familiar words, because of their recording his relentless analysis of human nature, his deep speculations upon life and the springs of character, and the portrayal of the consequences of sin, vice, or crime.

The "Federalist."

The *Federalist*, a series of papers written over the *nom de plume* Publius, and the Appendix, above the signatures of Pacificus and Helvetius, for the purpose of commending to the people of the State

of New York the proposed Constitution of the United States of America, were the works of ALEXANDER HAMILTON, JAMES MADISON, and JOHN JAY. Decided differences exist in the literary style of these statesmen. That of HAMILTON was marked by richness, elegance, and force; that of JAY by conciseness and point; while MADISON'S, not so florid as that of HAMILTON, nor so pithy as that of JAY, was exceedingly clear, in many passages glowing. Controversies early arose concerning the authorship of the respective parts. All authorities agree that HAMILTON wrote, by far, the largest and JAY much the smallest; that HAMILTON wrote numbers 1, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 12, 13, and many others; that JAY wrote numbers 2, 3, 4, 5; and that MADISON wrote numbers 10 and 14, and 37 to 48, inclusive.

The collection places in the possession of the student the linguistic resources of these men, writing under the deepest feeling in the most critical period of their public lives and with a fixed intention to be clear and cogent.

Forensic orations.

Great Speeches by Great Lawyers—a Collection of Arguments and Speeches before Courts and Juries by Eminent Lawyers, by WILLIAM L. SNYDER, of the New York bar, published by BAKER, VOORHIS & CO., of New York, is to be commended to all public speakers as furnishing examples of the style and a large part of the

vocabulary of PATRICK HENRY, WILLIAM PINCKNEY, WILLIAM WIRT, DANIEL WEBSTER, SARGENT S. PRENTISS, DAVID PAUL BROWN, WILLIAM H. SEWARD, Sir JAMES MACINTOSH, CHARLES O'CONOR, RUFUS CHOATE, EDWIN M. STANTON, JAMES T. BRADY, WILLIAM M. EVARTS, JOHN PHILPOT CURRAN, THOMAS ERSKINE, and many others, in the mightiest arguments and often during the most exciting forensic crises.

ERSKINE's speech was for the prosecution against THOMAS WILLIAMS for publishing PAINE's *Age of Reason.* That of Sir JAMES MACINTOSH was in behalf of a Frenchman indicted for a libel against NAPOLEON BONAPARTE.

Accounts and analyses of the different cases are given, some of which are more thrilling than the plots of the most famous works of fiction; the reader can readily follow the course of argument and estimate the force of language.

There is not an orator nor a reasoner who, if he has not read this collection, would not by doing so find it a delightful and strengthening intellectual exercise and a valuable addition to his vocabulary.

English and American poets.

The habitual and critical reading of the best English and American poets is not only serviceable, but indispensable, to one who would be prepared to speak effectively at any time upon any theme; and these may be easily divided into poets

of the heart, of the intellect, of pure imagination, of literature, of nature, and of religion.

William Pinckney, considered the greatest orator of the American bar, when he began was almost destitute of language adapted to express feeling, and he afterward declared that to attain it had cost him more effort than any other acquisition. Rufus Choate continued to improve his vocabulary so long as he lived.

Language of Feelings.

Professor Bain states the ground of this necessity:

"The Language of Feelings, both in their natural manifestations and in their verbal expression, has to be acquired. The meaning of the smile and the frown is learnt in infancy by observing what circumstances they go along with. The various modifications of the features, tones, and gestures for pleasure, pain, love, anger, fear, wonder, are connected with known occasions that show what they mean. Animals understand this language. There is a certain intrinsic efficacy in some modes of expression, as when soft and gentle tones are used for affection, and harsh, emphatic utterances for anger; but the play of the features has no original meaning; it must be understood by experience.

"Verbal expression greatly enlarges the compass of the language of the feelings. Every emotion has its characteristic forms of speech, expressing

its shades with great delicacy. Poets who wish to depict and excite the emotions require an unusual command of these forms and of all the images and associated circumstances that have the power to resuscitate the varieties of feeling." *

What is stated of the necessities of poets with respect to the Language of Feelings is equally true of orators.

* *Mental and Moral Science*, Alexander Bain, A.M., p. 107, paragraph 36.

CHAPTER XIV

Assimilation of Words

Necessity of assimilation illustrated.

Unless words are incorporated with the general furnishings and natural movements of the whole mind, it is impossible to evolve them in extemporaneous speech.

I had the pleasure of meeting the author of an interesting work upon the *Trees of America*, but was unable to converse with him satisfactorily on account of unfamiliarity with the strictly scientific terminology which he employed. Reduced to silence and humiliated, I immediately took up the study of his book, and others upon the subject, and in a subsequent interview suffered no embarrassment. My difficulty arose from the fact that what little technical knowledge I possessed on the subject had been acquired only by reading, and I was incapable of freely using the appropriate terms in extemporaneous speech.

Ordinary thoughts and proverbs.

Ordinary thoughts, as the result of involuntary imitation and reproduction of phrases heard in early life, exist in the minds of rational adults in set forms, such as "It rains," or "Man is mortal." Most of these are so imbedded in the mind that no mental process is necessary to select words for their expression, the form being associated with

the germ; even as the skilled accountant sees the figures in the column, and the answer presents itself contemporaneously with the perception of the factors.

Proverbs obtain circulation because of their brevity and pith. But the speaker must possess the ability of translating such into other language, and of amplifying them.

A rose with another but as sweet a name.

For example, a clergyman purposing to preach on human mortality, selects as a text, "It is appointed unto men once to die." His object being to create the emotions which reasonable beings should have in view of their mortality, he presents the subject in every suitable aspect. Should he at the end of every paragraph repeat the text, in a short time it would lose its effect. It is necessary for him to present that root idea in many forms.

This power is of even greater importance to a lawyer. A minister's congregation disperses, each going his way and deciding for himself whether to yield to the instructions he has received. But a jury cannot disperse until it has agreed upon a verdict, or spent a long time in fruitlessly trying to do so; therefore, unless the advocate can employ various ways of stating the familiar facts and principles involved in his cases, he will not succeed in persuading twelve men to his view, or in furnishing a majority with arguments and force of statement with which to convince the minority.

Charles James Fox, England's unsurpassed parliamentary debater, held that it is better that some of the audience should observe that the speaker is repeating material observations than that any should not understand. Pitt, Brougham, and Erskine emphasized the importance of amplification, and De Quincey, writing on Greek literature, maintains that a great orator must have the "gift of *tautology*." "Could he say the same thing three times over in direct sequence? for without this talent of iteration, of repeating the same thought in diversified forms, a man may utter good heads of an oration, but not an oration."

Nevertheless, unless he has the rare art to lead his hearers to believe that they are hearing something new, they will not bear his repetitions.

Place of the lexicon.

These facts show that the dictionary should be the constant companion of the man who aims to speak correctly. In this manner and by the constant reading of all forms of literature Rufus Choate accumulated his wonderful vocabulary. It is said that when a new dictionary was published containing ten thousand additional words, Chief Justice Shaw, before whom the great advocate frequently practiced, and between whom and himself there were many encounters, cried out, "Keep it from Choate, for if he gets it, all the rest of us must have it." Daniel Webster, when

asked what books he intended to study during the recess of Congress, replied, "The Dictionary."

One of the most effective speakers of my acquaintance, who has steadily improved for thirty years, makes it a point to read daily a page of a standard dictionary.

It is not desirable to confine oneself to a single authority, for dictionaries may reflect the predilections of their editors and compilers. Fanciful etymologies, peculiar pronunciations, and partial or strained definitions have thus been imposed upon the language.

Value of habit of translating.

The habit of translating classical Latin and Greek into English, especially in the early life of a public speaker, will give variety and freshness of style, particularly if the attempt be made to translate not into Latin and Greek derivatives which have found their way into English, but into Anglo-Saxon. The former will fasten themselves upon the mind naturally, while the choice, so far as possible, of Anglo-Saxon equivalents will double the number of words in the memory. There are few words in Greek or Latin which cannot be translated into Anglo-Saxon, for, though the Greeks and Latins possessed distinctions of meaning growing out of their civilization, they had few fundamental ideas not common to universal man. Our Anglo-Saxon ancestors had these conceptions and used their own words to translate

them, which accounts—together with the effect of the primitive directness and poetic fervor of the Hebrew mind and forms of expression—in large part for the simplicity and beauty of the Scriptures as they appear in "KING JAMES's version." Translations from modern languages will also yield good results. Each word, to express its different shades of meaning, may require many English words, and the translator in discriminating among them must unconsciously impress them all upon his mind; the more important will spontaneously attach themselves.

An excellent exercise is that of translating written thought into other language as rapidly as possible. This can be applied to standard poetical and prose works, or to passages of one's own which have been carefully prepared with the pen. It should be done orally, and with as much vigor and variety of voice and utterance as the subject would naturally suggest.

The critical spirit.

The habit of listening critically to the best speakers must be maintained. The extemporizer can never safely allow himself to listen without noting the words of the speaker, except when his emotions are profoundly stirred. A critical spirit during worship is a foe to devotion, and, in its last analysis, is irreverent. The hearer who does not prefer an increase of the spirit of devotion to an elegant style, which contributes nothing to the

depth of religious feeling, is not in a worshipful frame. Neither would one pause, when a PATRICK HENRY speaks, to consider whether each sentence is constructed in harmony with the technical rules of rhetoric.

But in general the critical spirit must be preserved. He who, without perceiving the error, listens to one who speaks ungrammatically, is certain himself to speak incorrectly. Eternal vigilance is the price of the correct use of language; for in this department, as elsewhere, "Evil communications corrupt good manners."

This method successfully followed.

On a Sabbath morning I invited a venerable minister to offer prayer, and was surprised by the facility of his utterance and the beauty of his style. That the prayer was not a recitation was manifest from local applications and references, some of them to the hymns and Scriptures which he had just heard, and others to events of public interest which had taken place within a day or two. This man had been retired for many years, and was disabled physically, but was able, without excitement, when unexpectedly called upon, to utter a prayer suitable for publication as an example of the elegant and correct use of the English language. At the close of the service I said, "How did you acquire your vocabulary?" and received this response: "I am an Englishman, and entered the ministry at the age of nineteen years, after

having been engaged in mechanical pursuits from childhood, with little or no opportunity for education. When I began to preach, knowing my deficiencies, and possessing but few books, the only thing I could do was to listen to every speaker, and when I heard what seemed to me a good word go immediately home and ascertain its meaning. Having done this, I used it as soon as I found a suitable opportunity."

Private conversation useful.

One who wishes to speak extemporaneously should converse much in private, and as correctly as if in public. While careful to avoid a bookish style, he should complete every sentence, and select, as he speaks, the words which exactly express his idea, when mingling with all classes —the refined, the uncultivated, and especially with children. Of all methods of acquiring the art of speaking impressively to an audience, attempting to interest children from five to fifteen years of age is the most helpful. He who succeeds in this, without the lingo known as baby talk, by the use of Anglo-Saxon, principally, though not wholly—for children can gather quickly the meaning of a word in its setting, which taken by itself would puzzle them—has power to interest any audience, provided his topic is in itself interesting.

Most addresses to children and most conversations with them proceed upon the fallacious as-

sumptions that one must "come down to them;" that they cannot be interested without an approach to buffoonery; that they cannot reason, and are interested only in things which appeal to their senses.

Two remarkable speakers.

Being of an argumentative turn of mind, I thought that I could not speak to children, and for five years declined to make the attempt. Circumstances led to a change in my views. I heard extraordinary accounts of the power a certain minister had displayed in addressing children upon the most metaphysical subjects imaginable —such as the immortality of the soul, the distinctions of morals, and the relation of the will to responsibility. He could hold them spellbound by speech as pure as that of Addison. I could scarcely believe such an achievement possible, as the average speaker in attempting to "come down" to the children frequently falls so far as to excite their contempt. I invited him to visit me, and though his advanced years would not allow him to preach, induced him to address the Sunday school. For fifteen minutes, with a diffused animation, without rapid contrasts, he spoke to them upon manhood and womanhood as developed from little men and little women. He illustrated graphically, but did not linger upon illustration; asked the children no questions—a refuge and often the snare of speakers who cannot interest. He used scarcely a gesture, but

whenever he paused the children were so absorbed that the ticking of the clock was distinctly heard.

A minister in the prime of life, whom from childhood I had been taught to respect, gave a Sunday school address in a smooth, flowing, anecdotal way; one incident led to another, all were interesting, each had a moral, and he beguiled the children into the belief that he was going on merely because they pleased him so much that he could not cease. When he closed they gave many indications of wishing him to proceed.

The secret.

To each of these men I propounded this question: "How did you learn your art?" The older said: "I always loved children, wished to do them good, and talked with them a great deal. I have no art except to use words that they can understand about things that they would like to understand, or need to know, or feel." The other said, "I talk with children whenever I have an opportunity, and speak with them in public just as I do in private."

There are men who have made fame by writing about modern methods of teaching children, who cannot interest them.

An advantage of conversing with children is that, if encouraged to do so, they will frankly reply, and their suggestions and the reflection necessary to rectify their errors will often open

whole fields of thought and suggest illustrations that might never have been thought of without such necessity. I have found that the methods which are most successful in holding the attention of children are those which will secure the attention of an assembly chiefly of the common people, even though there be a large percentage of cultivated persons among them. The passive state of the audience is favorable to the reception of the best ideas in the simplest form; and the docility of childhood is a type of the simplicity of receptiveness in all ages and conditions.

The art of nature.

Dr. John P. Durbin, one of the most eloquent of American orators, was able to speak to a child with such beauty of expression and propriety of enunciation that a company of educated ladies and gentlemen were entranced. Conversation was suspended and regret felt when the doctor turned from the delighted child to the rest of the company. In an earlier period, when enfeebled voice compelled him to suspend public efforts, he had gone from cabin to cabin among the Negroes on the plantations of Kentucky, conversing with them on religion, and claimed that by this process he acquired his marvelously simple style.

While talking in private may be carried so far as to develop a monologist—a tedious, prosaic monopolizer of conversation—this defect arises from a lack of self-control, and nature's principle

is the development of impulses to be restrained by an intelligent exercise of the will. The abnormal devotee of music who cannot restrain himself from singing, and is liable to interrupt public proceedings by unconsciously humming, cannot be adduced against that supreme devotion to the art which is the price of the highest proficiency.

Excess in the man, not in the principle.

Charles James Fox was in the habit of saying that he knew he should speak well when he found himself talking aloud upon the subject he intended to discuss.

Thus the experience of the parliamentary debater illustrates the physiological effect sententiously announced by Oliver Wendell Holmes: "*Worded* thought is attended with a distinct impulse toward the organs of speech; in fact, the effort often goes so far that we 'think aloud,' as we say." *

More important than any previous single suggestion, and necessary if one would derive the greatest benefit from all, is the habit of using new words extemporaneously as soon as learned, and in such relations that the reflex influence of their use upon the mind will be strong. A man may be able to recite ten thousand words merely as words, and be wholly unable to speak extemporaneously.

As an illustration of what may be done in the

* *Mechanism in Thought and Morals*, p. 29.

A self-made master.

acquisition of language under the most adverse circumstances, I adduce one of the greatest masters of language "ever produced by the English race"—ABRAHAM LINCOLN.

Professor JOHN P. GULLIVER, late of Andover, Mass., who was intimately acquainted with Mr. LINCOLN before the war, asked him how he acquired such a remarkable control of language, and reports this as his reply:

"Well, if I have got any power that way, I will tell you how I suppose I came to get it. You see, when I was a boy over in Indiana all the local politicians used to come to our cabin to discuss politics with my father. I used to sit by and listen to them, but father would not let me ask many questions, and there were a good many things I did not understand. Well, I'd go up to my room in the attic and sit down or pace back and forth till I made out just what they meant. And then I'd lie awake for hours just a-putting their ideas into words that the boys around our way could understand."

Whether Mr. LINCOLN said more or less on that occasion, there can be no doubt that from the earliest period he gave great attention to language, and to practicing in private, no less than in public, in the selection and utterance of words for the purpose of influencing others. This, however, would not wholly account for Mr. LINCOLN'S

marvelous mastery of language, both in speech and deliberate composition.

Laurels from afar.

The London *Spectator,* in discussing his character, recently said:

"No criticism of Mr. LINCOLN can be in any sense adequate that does not deal with his astonishing power over words; and it is not too much to say of him that he is among the greatest masters of prose ever produced by the English race. Mr. LINCOLN did not get his ability to handle prose through his gift of speech. That these are separate though coordinate faculties is a matter beyond dispute; for many of the great orators of the world prove themselves exceedingly inefficient in the matter of deliberate composition."

It further states that every line that LINCOLN ever wrote shows that "the writer is master of his materials; that he guides his words, never the words him."

His speeches in the debate with STEPHEN A. DOUGLAS, often in replication when it was impossible for him to prepare, demonstrate his possession of the same marvelous power over words in extemporization. He may, therefore, be presented as an example of what can be done in the acquisition and mastery of words under the most unpropitious circumstances.

CHAPTER XV

General Preparation of Thought

A "minute man."

THE memory of the extemporaneous speaker must be well stored with *facts*, since he cannot foresee the moment when he will be called upon to vindicate his views by an appeal to them. Whatever his profession, a knowledge of facts relating to human nature in general is of the utmost value. Neither in public nor private, by speech or writing, can men influence men unless they have acted upon the principle that the "proper study of mankind is man." Nor can the number of normal facts which embody or illustrate human nature be too large. Even upon subjects with which he is familiar the orator should glance at every fact which any one of the senses may present; for one that is new may differ in some degree from others of the same class—or at least give freshness to the conception and stimulate the memory.

Natural science.

Facts of Natural Science are of increasing utility. Induction is no longer peculiar to scientists, but has reached the common mind, and deduction is remanded more and more to the lucubrations of the theologian, the metaphysician, and the jurist. To the educated and uneducated

alike Natural Science is now the most interesting of themes. The daily press, weekly and monthly periodicals, thousands of monographs, and more elaborate scientific treatises constantly direct the public mind to these subjects. Lecturers here find fruitful fields, and every cable dispatch is scanned with an expectation of the announcement of some discovery. The extempore speaker must be abreast of the times, capable of discriminating between the immature statements of reporters and genuine phenomena. A great change has taken place in this particular since the days of CHESTERFIELD. Referring to the dictum of CICERO, that an orator must know every great art and science, CHESTERFIELD says: "With submission to so great an authority, my definition of an orator is extremely different from, and I believe much truer than, his. I call that man an orator who reasons justly and expresses himself elegantly upon whatever subject he treats. Problems in Geometry, Equations in Algebra, Processes in Chemistry, and Experiments in Anatomy are never, that I have heard of, the objects of eloquence; and therefore I humbly conceive that a man may be a very fine speaker and yet know nothing of Geometry, Algebra, Chemistry, or Anatomy. The subjects of all parliamentary debates are subjects of common sense singly." *

Weigh with judgment.

Letter 121.

The march of science.

This letter places in a clear light the amazing advance of science during the past one hundred years, and its changed relation to oratory. What then was relegated to the realm of the imagination has now been brought under the dominion of natural law, without losing, except in the most insensate natures, its power to charm or its influence over diction.

A mistake in allusions to science may cover with confusion a really eloquent speaker. Thus a minister whose theme was "The Lord God is a sun and a shield," began a noble passage in this way: "Have you, my brethren, considered the debt that we owe to the sun, the triumphant king of day, the great revolving sphere which brings all things into visibility? Were it not for the sun we should have to be content with the pale and insufficient light of the moon."

Culture and criticism.

But while more attention is given to Natural Science, a renaissance of Literary Culture and Criticism has extended to every sphere of learning. The classic and mediæval poets and the works of worthy successors who have recently passed away, leaving a sad dearth, are all read, interpreted, and made the subject of intellectual and emotional controversy; and he who can make a just or a suggestive reference, brief and pointed, to questions growing out of such studies, or quote an appropriate line to enforce a thought, is certain to receive atten-

tion from a considerable portion of any audience. The day of long quotations in public speech is past, but not that of the pertinent and the piquant.

History and Biography.

A thorough knowledge of General History and Biography is indispensable to a free speaker. He must be cyclopedic in the range of his information upon these subjects, if for no other purpose than to protect himself from errors which will excite contempt. Dr. JOHN P. DURBIN, in his early ministry, preached in the presence of Justice MCLEAN, of the Supreme Court of the United States, and in a glowing passage uttered the phrase, "When HANNIBAL, the great Roman general." At the close Judge MCLEAN said to him, "My friend, HANNIBAL was a *Carthaginian* general." The criticism led the young preacher to pursue the study of history systematically, until his knowledge of it became such that he could refer to any renowned military leader and give a succinct statement of his career.

There is no History of which Biography is not the chief part. Laws are made, battles planned and fought, revolutions fomented and carried to success, and institutions upreared and maintained by men. Arms and armor, cannon and ammunition, are invented and utilized by men. There is no History without Biography, and no Biography which does not require History to render it intelligible. That Biography is frequently a romance founded on fact, but quite independent of it, and

that History may be less true than fiction, students of mature years are aware. But Biography often pricks the rhetorical bubbles of the writer of fictitious History, and truthful History frequently reduces the hero to his proper place in the perspective of human progress. The extemporizer, therefore, to steady his flight, especially in the realms of eulogy and censure, needs to be thoroughly grounded in these cognate branches.

Prevalent but inexcusable.

Ignorance of the history of one's own country is unpardonable, and it is impossible to be familiar with it without being acquainted to a considerable degree with the history of other countries.

That an extemporaneous speaker should be master of the Institutions under which he lives is self-evident; for of these the people know so much that ignorance on his part will cost him their respect; and it is a strong tendency of human nature to believe a man unreliable in everything if he is discovered to be so in anything with which the hearer is conversant.

In consideration of the fact that Christianity is a part of the common law of England, and that the institutions of this country have been largely influenced by English common law, as well as by Christianity apart therefrom, a knowledge of Sacred History is of inestimable value to every public speaker. Lawyers, political speakers, poets, novelists, and often antichristian lecturers draw their

most striking similes, historical allusions, and aphoristic statements from the Bible.

Peculiar needs of the ministry.

The clergyman must be a specialist in Christian History and Biography. He must not only know that of his own, but of other communions, since he will be called upon to defend his principles and his constituents. He will frequently be questioned by the undecided with respect to the body with which they should affiliate. He may be attacked and the views of others held up in glowing contrast to his own. If he knows that only which appertains primarily to his own faith, forms, and discipline, he may fall into an error with respect to others, which, when exposed, will cheapen him in the public eye.

He should be able to give extemporaneously a fair account of every denomination—orthodox, heterodox, or paradox. For him to be ignorant of the Bible is a disgrace. To be unable to harmonize with it the views which he professes to have drawn from it will render him contemptible.

The lawyer's specialty.

The lawyer cannot be content with a general knowledge of the principles of law, but must accumulate a multitude of authoritative precedents, be familiar with the great cases, with judicial decisions, with the Constitution of the United States, of his own State and adjacent States, keep abreast of legislation, and hold all in such relentless grasp that at a moment's notice he can represent

them correctly. Great as is this burden, it is heavier in England than in the United States, from the fact that the British Constitution resembles an immortal personality, ever changing, yet without the exhibition of authorized records, and requiring constant vigilance on the part of students to keep pace with its development.

The fact-seeking instinct.

In order to accumulate facts there must be perpetual alertness of mind. The professional detective perceives a thousand things which an ordinary observer would not notice. The hunter listens to every sound and notices every broken leaf. The extemporizer should have as keen a scent for facts as the hound for game, and also needs the spirit of the detective. The memory of facts may operate in either of two ways: there may be a remembrance of a fact by its title, so that the man's brain is like a library catalogue; but this sort of memory is of little worth to the extemporizer. It transforms the mind into a mere *index rerum*. One who has it can sit down, pen in hand, and call up facts, select those that he considers appropriate, and associate them in the body of an essay; but the extemporizer can make scant progress thus. He must bound and measure every fact when he adopts it, determine in what class it belongs and what it will prove or illustrate. When he thus weighs and authenticates he may be assured that the facts are incorporated in the raw material of

thought, and that the laws of association will certainly revive them whenever they are necessary to the work in hand. He need not exhaust himself by the ceaseless iteration of the question, "What have I ever seen or heard that will serve my purpose now?" By an inexorable law, meditation will summon from every recess of his mind everything bearing upon it. Attention is the open sesame to his treasures.

Perpetually recompensed.

So far is this ceaseless search and scrutiny from being a life of slavery that it becomes almost automatic; it is a preventive of *ennui,* a remedy for depression and loneliness, and a marvelous economy of time; rendering it possible for one, though lost in a swamp, or detained a week at quarantine, to discover something which will subsequently reconcile him to what otherwise would seem an irretrievable loss of time.

CHAPTER XVI

Ideas

"Wisdom is profitable to direct."

To store the memory with proverbs, apothegms, aphorisms, and sayings upon all subjects and in various languages is desirable, but unless the speaker is sufficiently familiar with such languages as to think in them, those originating in non-English-speaking countries should be committed in translations. It is essential to master the idea, and not merely to commit the proverb, otherwise the association will be strictly verbal; whereas, if it be valued chiefly for its meaning, it will be susceptible of revival in memory by any one of countless combinations. The value of such short sentences is incalculable in giving pith to paragraphs, in recapitulation, or graphic rendering of ideas in the rough already in possession of the hearer, but which must be outlined distinctly in his field of vision.

Fine home-spun.

Common men in various walks of life, without a consciousness on their own part of saying anything new, strange, or strong, often express themselves in sentences superior in force and condensation to most proverbs. Mark Guy Pearse wrote a book entitled *Dan'el Quorm*, practically the biography and sharp sayings of a plain, unedu-

cated man who had singular penetration of mind and force of speech. Reading that work I thought of various acquaintances who had impressed me with the brightness or shrewdness of their observations, and can recall several of whom as interesting a book might be written.

Educated foreigners, in their efforts to express themselves in an adopted tongue, often utter striking epigrams. Their vocabulary not being large, they are compelled to make the words which they are able to use carry all possible significations. To listen to them, therefore, is frequently an education in the possibilities of one's native tongue. The extemporizer who has formed the habit of listening to every person of intelligence and individuality may be without access to a library for a long time, but will never lack opportunities to learn "the art of putting things." These may be called ideas in verbal forms.

Generalizations.

The extemporizer should be accurately acquainted with the great general conceptions included in the thoughts of the learned. It is not difficult for those who read, think, and mingle with men to comprehend all these conceptions, since the number of fundamental generalizations must be limited. Certain broad views underlie Science as a whole and the sciences respectively; certain theories are generally held concerning human nature, and there is no subject upon which a

general view can exist upon which opposing or divergent theories have not at some time been held by minds of no small degree of power.

The opinions of other men may be of great use, and oftentimes a knowledge of them be of prime necessity. Most generalizations are acquired in the course of an education, so that it is necessary only to consider from time to time the whole field of thought and to test one's mental furnishing by the chief authorities.

Comprehensive classifications.

The weakness of many ordinarily eloquent and convincing speakers is occasionally pitifully revealed by a remark which shows that they are ignorant of the outlines of some important domain of science or philosophy. It is possible to respect other thinkers without concurring in their opinions; but if one intends to oppose errors, he must be acquainted with them.

There are many things which each thinker firmly holds. Sydney Smith once said that he wished he was as sure of anything as Macaulay was of everything. But it is impossible to advocate with convincing force what one does not believe. There are lawyers who defend with zeal and apparent sincerity any case, however unfounded, but no man is truly eloquent, though he be a professional advocate, unless he can find some point which he fully accepts. If his client be charged with murder, he may show a flaw in the indict-

ment; bring forward witnesses to prove an alibi; endeavor to demonstrate that the provocation was so great that the man was rendered irresponsible by it; or that he acted in self-defense. He may show that the father of the accused was insane or a drunkard, and that the defendant is an epileptic, or that he inherited such an unstable, nervous system as to make him incapable of self-control.

The magnet of conviction.

It is related of CHARLES CHAPMAN, a famous advocate in his day, that when he had nothing else to say he made an eloquent appeal based on the fact that the victim was so obnoxious that the murderer had conferred a public service. This being beyond the privileges of counsel, he resorted to a stratagem to introduce it, to this effect:

"Human life is a sacred thing. I do not stand here to say that it should ever be taken with impunity. But it is proper for you, gentlemen of the jury, in considering all the circumstances of this case, to remember that, if at any time during the past fifteen years a decree had gone forth from some higher power that one of the citizens of Litchfield County should suddenly disappear and be seen no more, and that the person who was to receive this honor should be selected by ballot, the deceased, on whose account this proceeding was brought, would have received an immense majority of the votes of his fellow-citizens."

The ingenuity of the criminal lawyer, and even

of the civil lawyer, is often taxed to the utmost to find a point which he believes to be true; for he knows that if he does not find such a standing ground, his efforts will prove abortive.

Ideas upon which the extemporizer has no settled conviction may bear the presumptive aspect of importance, but he is thus far uncertain whether they are true or false. He respects their proponents too highly to treat with contempt the results of their lucubrations. It is vital that he should be able to distinguish his beliefs from his disbeliefs, and both from his state of mind upon questions yet unsettled. At any time he may be brought to the necessity of referring to one of these, or be questioned by those to whom he has spoken. If he has not clearly classified his ideas, and, when speaking, a question on which he has no definite opinion springs up in his mind, in excitement he may utter, as his own, sentiments which are foreign to his nature and life. His audience will feel this, and, though he be speaking brilliantly, he will be disparaged.

Must be an habitual and original investigator.

It is necessary for the professional extemporizer to have settled opinions. To do this he must reflect and examine for himself, since neither a prejudice nor a prepossession is an opinion. Habitual reserve is fatal to eloquence, and the public will resent it. There cannot be convictions without opinions, and he who touches an opinion

which is the root of a strong conviction will paralyze himself if he attempts to avoid the necessity of expressing the conviction, or to utter such an opinion otherwise than in the accents of conviction.

If it be supposed—in view of the progress of ideas and the contributions of invention and discovery—that one must be continually reinvestigating, it should be remembered that an instantaneous perception with respect to subjects already thoroughly investigated will determine in most instances the bearing and weight of an additional consideration or fact. A master of the principles upon which our constitution rests, having carefully considered the arguments in favor of a monarchy and all that can be adduced in favor of a republic, need not consume his time reading new books upon the subject. The institutions under which he lives justify themselves daily to him.

The solid rock.

He who has settled his religious faith, and as he acts upon it receives a confirmation of his fundamental ideas, a supply for the needs and a remedy for the maladies of his moral nature, need not disturb himself nor allow others to do so; if principles are advocated that directly tend to vice, he is capable of antagonizing them without reinvestigation.

In the neutral ground between the settled and the unsettled there are many notions and not a few working hypotheses of such slight importance

that it makes little difference whether they are true or not; so that before deciding to investigate he should consider whether the subject be of sufficient importance. On the other hand, he will find some so complex that they must be left to specialists.

When silence is golden.

It should be a fixed principle of the extemporizer to be reticent upon every subject which he has not thoroughly investigated and with respect to which his opinions are not settled. SOLOMON'S wisdom will condemn him if he speak: "He that answereth a matter before he heareth it, it is folly and shame unto him."

CHAPTER XVII

Items, Anecdotes, Similes, and Illustrations

The proper method of availing oneself of the stores of information and misinformation daily spread before the world by the press is to clip from the newspapers items relating to whatever he desires to propagate or to oppose; also, those treating questions which he purposes to investigate. From the accumulation of such clippings he may cull such as prove worthy of permanent preservation.

"Prove all things."

In order to test what the press conveys to him, his library should contain one or more standard authorities upon the whole scope of human thought. He should have at hand the newest general text-books in the progressive sciences, prepared for schools and colleges, so that when a journalist has had an interview with a scientist and lucidly described the same the speaker, by means of his knowledge of the fundamental principles and by reference to the highest authority, can protect himself from any inadvertent errors which such communications may contain. The best papers convey a vast amount of correct information. Yet mingled therewith are numerous inaccurate items concerning history, biog-

raphy, literature, science, law, medicine, and theology.

Following blindly one of these misleading items (often correct when originally published, but having through typographical errors or mistakes of the copyist become incorrect), an orator of much fame delivered a splendid paragraph based on the distance of the moon from the earth; but there was an error of one hundred thousand miles in his calculations. The extemporizer *must* be an habitual verifier of his references.

The fascination of "once upon a time."

Midway between the domain of facts and that of ideas are anecdotes, illustrations, and similes An appropriate anecdote, well told, affords the best means of enlivening an audience and illustrating an abstruse theme. The spoken style of ABRAHAM LINCOLN derived much of its magical power from his pertinent anecdotes. Yet it is due his fame to note that, though his anecdotal resources of memory and facility of creation were almost infinite, on important occasions he used them sparingly.

Poetic or semipoetic similes, if not too numerous, render a discourse sparkling and have a peculiar charm, and the extemporizer should count that day not lost in which he finds a new and striking illustration.

Illuminating the path.

This method is an essential aid to the apprehension of new truth or novel phases of truth. When a

statement of a new idea is brought forward, unless there be something already known with which one or more of its terms may be compared, that idea will remain unintelligible. Thus trades are taught. The apprentice advances, step by step, from a known to an unknown resembling it in many particulars. So science is acquired; for there is among the sciences a mutual dependence, one facilitating the understanding of another.

The most celebrated Protestant ministers of modern times, CHARLES HADDON SPURGEON and HENRY WARD BEECHER, dissimilar in doctrine, character, and career, resembled each other in the facility and effectiveness with which they employed illustrations. And the key to the mystery of the style of Him who taught scribe, lawyer, and philosopher, and of whom it was said, "The common people heard him gladly," is in the words, "Whereunto shall the kingdom of heaven be likened?"

Carry no dark lanterns.

This is, however, the stumbling-stone of the extemporizer, for an illustration to be effective must be within the comprehension of those to whom it is addressed; otherwise it will need illustrating. References to trades and sciences, to the heavenly bodies, to electricity, to the circulation of the blood, have often been made with a view of illustrating something comparatively simple,

which, not being understood, left the original subject in impenetrable obscurity.

Illustrations must resemble, at least in one respect, that which they are designed to illustrate. A Western orator became envious of a speaker who excelled in this art, and advertised that he would deliver an illustrated discourse. After proceeding for a while in his usual dry and laconic method he uttered a passage entirely disconnected with anything that had gone before: "I see before me a young man of noble form, the fire of ambition gleaming in his eye, determination visible in his firmly-set lips, his bosom expanding with the consciousness of power, intent upon the pursuit of fame. I see him start from home, full of hope and life, hastening across the plain. Now he descends a sharp declivity; at the base is a dark, dismal swamp; but, undaunted, he plunges in; there let us leave him and pass on to the consideration of our second thought."

Enough better than a feast.

Illustrations must not be too absorbing lest they divert the attention of the hearer from the original theme. Nor should they be numerous or long drawn out; one so clear that all can see its aptness is sufficient. They should be adapted to impress the memory, suggest the truth, and kindle the appropriate emotion. This requires that they consist of things natural, yet not too familiar, and that they be vividly portrayed.

Trained perception and discrimination

The habit of reflecting upon anecdotes, incidents, or facts of any kind, with reference to their utility as illuminators of discourse, and not merely to their value as proof or to their intrinsic interest as information, will so impress them upon the mind that, as the time draws near for an address, the speaker will have no difficulty in making a selection which, by its novelty, will stimulate the attention of the hearer and perhaps influence his feelings or judgment.

Should he at any time be compelled to speak without adequate special preparation, illustrations will flow toward his lips under the guidance of the ruling thought, requiring only that prompt and intelligent discrimination in their use which is the habit of his life.

CHAPTER XVIII

The Value and Tyranny of Reminiscences

In spontaneous memory the thoughts come and go through the mind, but unless one is conscious that he has had them before, he cannot be said to remember them. There is also a higher state than remembrance where the differences among men come more clearly into view; for many who remember cannot recollect. When anything which they have previously experienced occurs to them, or they are reminded of it by others, they recognize it, but when called upon to relate certain facts they have little power to recall the details.

Names for each manifestation of memory.

To the ability to respond at will has been given the name recollection. It is the art of sending the mind to rummage the brain, as one might search a library for a book which he knows is there. In former times reminiscence was used exclusively as the equivalent of recollection, but more recently the word has been more generally restricted to a narration of the circumstances, sensations, and reflections of individual experience. The reminiscent mood is not mere spontaneous memory or remembrance, nor yet laborious recollection, but habitually dwelling upon the past; especially incidents, characteristics, events, within one's own

knowledge, including the books that he has read and the conversations he has had. Such reminiscences may at any time glide into mere remembrance, and the thoughts may come and go as in a dream or a reverie, not departing from the regular track made in the mind. At other times, when in a reminiscent mood, one's curiosity may be excited and the greatest intellectual effort performed in endeavoring to recollect.

The value of reminiscences, as distinguished from mere remembrance and from the arduous labors of recollection, cannot be overestimated.

Personal property.

Facts of local experience and the fruits of travel should not be allowed to flit through the mind, or go "glimmering through the dream of things that were, a schoolboy's tale, the wonder of an hour." What one has felt, seen, smelled, tasted, or heard he knows to be a reality, provided he has educated his judgment and taught it to test one sense by another, and all by the exercise of reason. Others may resort to the same methods of acquiring knowledge which he has used in the various departments of learning, but his experiences and reminiscences are his own, and one who is master of himself can be placed in no position where he cannot say something pertinent and which has not already been said.

Refreshing springs.

Recollection searches a garden; reminiscence presents the diversified products of the universe.

They furnish all the materials of discursive thought; for the mind, when not locked in dreamless slumber or bent to particular tasks, ranges over the entire field of previous investigation, contemplation, and experience. Hence reminiscences are the fountains of spontaneity. Rooted in personality, they are practically the hooks upon which are hung new acquisitions preparatory to assimilation.

When one thinks of his first railway journey his own reminiscences present to him a contrast with the visible improvements of the day, so that, without conscious effort, he traces the evolution of that which is from that which was. It is by this means that many are qualified to deliver, with little special preparation, addresses upon an endless variety of topics.

Under secret combination lock.

Reminiscences need neither patent nor copyright, for it is inconceivable that the reminiscences of two individuals can be precisely the same. They are, therefore, the primary source of originality in oratory, poetry, and conversation. Their specific character accounts for the ever-varied and fresh manner in which real orators are able to treat the same topic, and in a series of meetings may entrance audiences by eloquence upon a subject which, to the common mind, would not seem likely to furnish the materials for an hour's good speaking.

During five annual meetings of the American Antislavery Association in Boston I heard George B. Cheever, William Lloyd Garrison, Frederick Douglass, Theodore Parker, Parker Pillsbury, Henry C. Wright, Wendell Phillips, Stephen S. Foster, Abby Kelly Foster, Lucretia Mott, and others, on successive days, morning, afternoon, and evening. The peculiar fascination exerted by each was in his or her reminiscences, expressed or implied, and even their predictions were born of their past.

During the same pregnant epoch equal eloquence was displayed in the Southern States by conscientious defenders of slavery, so that the history of "the irrepressible conflict" may be searched in vain for passages surpassing the vivid and truthful descriptions of the satisfactory relations subsisting between the slave and his master, based on the reminiscences of men who had seen the better phase of the "peculiar institution."

Kaleidoscopic fecundity.

Reminiscences ever increase in value as a means of economizing power. They give to the lawyer of long practice much of his readiness and pertinency. It is not merely the remembrance, nor the recollection, but the habit of going over one's own past, which, in response to a slight suggestion of the will, causes to pass before the mind, in new and striking forms, every thought

and feeling incorporated in the ever-increasing experiences of the speaker.

Following an ignis fatuus.

There are, however, serious dangers attendant upon a reminiscent tendency. For when one is absorbed in his own past he cannot be attentively regarding the present; hence the reminiscent are inclined to make their previous acquisitions a substitute for study. Since close thinking is fatiguing, and the reminiscential mood is not so, many hallucinate themselves into the belief that they are thinking when they are merely indulging in retrospective reverie. Dr. JOHNSON truly says, "As few men will endure the labor of intense meditation without necessity, he that has learned enough for his profit or his want seldom endeavors after further acquisitions."

Under such circumstances, when one is invited to speak, he is liable to begin with a reminiscence, which might be quite proper if it did not lead to another, which could be endured did it not conduct to a third. Important meetings have been ruined by excellent men who have yielded themselves to a stream of reminiscences, consuming the time of other speakers and exhausting the patience of the audience.

Pessimistic or optimistic egotism.

Reminiscences are liable to render one incapable of properly estimating the age in which he lives. If its drift coincides with his views, he is prone to regard the age as advancing with rapidity toward

perfection, and in the midst of vice, absurdities, and crazes to declare that "there has never been a time since the creation of the world when there was so much of everything desirable and so little of anything undesirable as now." But if the age is moving in a direction contrary to his own life, he sees nothing to commend. Optimists and pessimists alike are made such by their reminiscences, and the extemporizer is insensibly controlled by them to a high degree.

This accounts for the extreme bitterness and censoriousness which some extemporizers exhibit in public, who in private display a spirit quite the opposite. In social life they are restrained by politeness, but when absorbed they pour forth, sometimes in strains of exalted eloquence, a jaundiced view, which produces an impalpable, but real, opposition of feeling in a large part of any assembly which they may address.

The reader or the reciter, composing in the unintoxicating atmosphere of the study, might perceive the impropriety of "uttering all his mind;" but the extemporizer may be hurried on, to the impairment or destruction of his influence.

"Handle with care."

Reminiscences are to be dealt with as the chemist deals with indispensable elements of an explosive nature. They produce excellent results, but must be delicately manipulated and strict attention must be given to proportion.

CHAPTER XIX

General Preparation of Feeling

Evanescent sensibility.

Those who naturally respond to the sympathetic demands of every situation, with such strength of feeling as to make necessary the practice of self-control, need give little thought to the necessity of being generally prepared in this realm. Their gift for a while may be depended upon; although they would do well to note whether the springs of emotion are drying up with the flight of time; for there have been orators dependent chiefly upon feeling, who, neglecting intellectual preparation, in the midst of their years lost their power and sank into ante-mortem oblivion. A distinction must be noted between true feeling and that lachrymose condition implying merely nervous susceptibility, which grows upon some until they weep, whatever the theme or occasion, whenever they speak in public.

Indurating influences.

In childhood and youth feeling predominates over reason. An instantaneous response is made to every influence adapted to stimulate appetite, emotion, and affection. The spectacle of an insensible youth suggests imbecility, vice, or abnormal criminal instincts. Contact with society, conflict, disappointment, the perils and bitter lessons

of experience, the absorption of energy in work and study, and especially the bearing of burdensome responsibilities, tend to diminish feeling and to repress its signs. Men especially are chagrined and ashamed when they cannot control themselves, and in the attritions of democratic society women may become more self-contained than was the average man a few years ago.

A speaker who practices habitual self-control, and especially one who represses every emotion, will fail to attain or soon lose the power of effective speech where persuasion is essential to success. A minister without genuine religious feeling and personal devotion to those to whom he speaks cannot reach the hearts of men.

An expert's testimony.

M. L'Abbe Mullois, who was chaplain to the Emperor Napoleon III, and Missionary Apostolic, observes: "An Arab proverb runs thus: 'The neck is bent by the sword; but heart is only bent by heart.' If you love, you yourself will be loved; the truth from you will be loved; . . . You may employ the most splendid reasonings, clothed in the grandest phraseology, and yet the mind of man will find wherewith to elude them. Who knows but that French wit by one malicious word may not upset all at once your elaborate structure of arguments? What is required in sacred eloquence is something new, something unexpected. See, you, what it is? It is love; for, loving, you

will surprise and captivate; you will be irresistible." *

Wet blankets.

In contrast with this many ministers deliver truth without earnestness and without sympathy. Many while preaching seem to be sympathetic, but avoid rather than seek the people to whom they preach; and when compelled to meet them in times of affliction exhibit a chilling reserve or an irritating nonchalance. A successful pleader before juries must be alive with feeling, stimulated by the causes he represents, sympathetic with his clients, capable of being stirred to his depths by the responsibilities of his position.

It must be conceded that strong emotion is a foe to pure reason; in fact, to all strictly intellectual work. In poetry inaccuracy in phraseology, except in the iambic style, is not an important defect, and in some forms of oratory exaggeration seems to be one of the means of producing impressions when it is the involuntary and unconscious result of the excitement of strong passions, though it often destroys the influence of those who habitually yield to the pernicious tendency. Yet in all that he says the extemporizer should be as susceptible to emotion as is compatible with coherence of thought, and as close and sound in reasoning as is compatible with sufficient feeling to move the heart.

* *The Clergy and the Pulpit in Their Relation to the People.*

Whatever abstract reasoners and casuists may say, human actions are the results of mingled motives. The orator should cultivate high personal ambition; he should never willingly fall below his best, never rest upon his reputation, never think it a light thing to address an assembly, and should aim to equal or surpass his contemporaries. It is possible to be "rivals in glory without personal animosity." Blending of the best motives.

The feelings natural to a situation should not be resisted. Only those liable to become unmanned are justified in endeavoring to suppress natural emotion. The best prescription for any orator is in the precept issued to Christians by an apostle, "Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep." Be righteously indignant with those that are righteously indignant. Be enthusiastic with those who are zealous in a good cause.

Except where one suspects the motives of an orator he should yield himself to be wrought into ebullitions of delight by eloquent descriptions or melted by appeals. There is no foe to eloquence like the condition expressed by the word *blasé*.

Emotion may be variously expressed, but it will be difficult to adduce an instance of marked effects attending an insensate preacher. Temporarily such a person, addressing a congregation in which religious feeling has been developed and

which retains its ordinary forms of expression, may seem to enkindle emotion, and the church may receive accessions, but only the unobservant will attribute the result to the pastor; in a few years the congregation itself will undergo a change and become irresponsive, cold, and apathetic. There is no form of oratory in which strong feeling will not contribute greatly to success, or the entire absence of it prove an insurmountable barrier.

The letter of theology and law anti-emotional.

The habitual cultivation of feeling is important, and the more so in the proportion that one's circumstances or occupation naturally contribute to its suppression. The protracted study of theology —except when it deals with topics interwoven with experience—exerts this influence over many temperaments.

The too technical study of law may deaden the heartstrings similarly. A great criminal lawyer who became a judge and was conscious of his defects of preparation determined to comprehend every principle and to study thoroughly every case, being resolved to disappoint the predictions of those who condemned his appointment. By intense application he took rank among judges famous for correct decisions and luminous and convincing opinions. When his term of service expired he resumed practice. But, though in earlier life his feelings were easily aroused by any case which directly or indirectly involved life, liberty, or individual rights,

he found that years of abstract study had dried the springs of emotion, and after making abortive efforts to be what he once was he gradually drifted exclusively into civil cases.

Fertilizers of the emotions.

The methods of cultivating the emotional nature are few, but the results of habitually pursuing them are sure. It is within the reach of all to read the best pathetic writings, the masterpieces of emotional oratory, meditating upon the most moving terms and similes, and vividly conceiving the scenes depicted. To hear orators who seem to feel and are the cause of feeling in others is an inspiration.

Responsiveness to the varying scenes of human life should be counted a virtue and cultivated. The love of wife and children, a grateful devotion to the comfort of parents, the cherishing of tender recollections of faces "loved and lost a while," and warm personal interest in the sorrows no less than in the joys of one's neighbors and friends are as effectual in the promotion of genuine sensibility as are the forsaking of home for business, dissipation, or club-life in deadening it.

But more effectual than all other helps, because it includes and purifies all, is an earnest, reverent Christian life, equally removed from cant and superstition. Its roots being faith, hope, and love, the fruit is a perennial flow of pure and healthful emotion.

CHAPTER XX

Elocution for the Extemporizer

The scope of elocution is frequently misapprehended; hence its utility is much debated. A typical conversation upon the subject consists of one person's affirming that the greatest orators knew nothing about elocution; that the study is generally injurious, as all whom he has known to pursue it have been harmed; and another's maintaining that a majority of celebrated orators have been close students of this art. The first will reply that we learn to talk naturally and easily; that all we have to do is to speak in public as we talk in private, and we become orators; that the study of elocution renders speakers artificial and robs them of power.

False premises and misleading conclusions.

When this plausible statement is tested by facts it is found to be in substance untrue. We learn to talk easily, and the process of learning is natural, but the chief instrument of it is spontaneous imitation. He, therefore, who is reared among the uncouth and the passionate may talk easily, perhaps far too easily for the comfort of those with whom he associates; but unless his naturally acquired evil habits are eradicated by the most arduous labor, he will bear their marks

while he lives and perpetuate them in his children.

All are not eloquent in conversation; indeed, good conversers are rare. The articulation of many persons is indistinct if they are rapid in speech; and if slow, they are often hesitating, beginning sentences which they do not finish. Some mumble; others speak so loudly as to render themselves nuisances in public conveyances and in company.

Exceptions that prove the rule.

I maintain that with comparatively few exceptions all unusually fine orators have devoted themselves to elocution, most of them under teachers; and that most of those who have succeeded without professional instruction have applied to self-criticism systematic thought and the results of observation with such persistent thoroughness as to be equivalent to a special study.

Of prominent orators who never studied the technique of the oratorical art there are a few, like Patrick Henry, who have attained the highest grade. They are to be likened to a few poets without a knowledge of general literature or the laws of versification, or to a few singers and players upon instruments, who, with extraordinary sensibility, have been able to dispense with instruction. Many preachers have arisen in the different denominations who, without a knowledge of elocution, when under strong excitement rose to

lofty heights of oratory, but these ordinarily moved upon a lower plane and exhibited numerous imperfections.

The prejudice against the study of this art has arisen from a variety of causes, among which are that it has been made extremely technical, and that many have given attention to it only so far as to destroy or deteriorate whatever is natural to them without the substitution of a cultivated second nature.

Many of little oratorical susceptibility have studied elocution and boldly appeared in public as orators, but have been unsuccessful. Real or alleged students have become ostentatious and theatrical in style, in conspicuous contrast to former simplicity, which, with all its imperfections, was preferable to stilted accuracy. Such often presume to be critics of ordinary speakers, yet in effectiveness fall so far below as to subject themselves to ridicule.

What the free speaker cannot do.

The elocutionary preparation of the extemporizer must be general; for, while it is possible for the reader and the reciter to determine in advance the tones with which particular phrases, sentences, and paragraphs should be uttered, it is impossible for the extemporizer to do so, for he does not foreknow what phrases, sentences, or paragraphs he will utter. Hence he can learn little by observation of the actor, or from one who in-

structs actors, except general principles, and these will be of no value unless assimilated and he acts in harmony with them.

Sometimes the sole purpose of a speaker is to entertain, as when one narrates an incident for its wit, general interest, humor, extravagance, or other quality which may be pleasing. Under such circumstances the speaker is sure of attention, unless he is preternaturally dull. It is in relation to the other and more necessary functions of speech that it is necessary to emphasize the importance of being heard with satisfaction.

Dullness reciprocal.

Instruction delivered in an unattractive way is rarely received with interest. Those who need to be convinced are quite willing to have their attention distracted, while to stir the emotions of those who find no pleasure in listening is difficult and often impossible. He is unwise and often discovers that people will not listen to him who says within himself or in the hearing of others: "I do not care how I speak. I have something to say that the people ought to hear, and I will make them hear it."

The most necessary parts of every important discourse will fail unless the speaker's pronunciation enchains attention.

That which promotes these results can be called reasonable elocution; that which neither helps nor hinders is not so; that which hinders opposes rea-

son. The practical question is, How far is such common-sense elocution natural, and how far may it be improved by art?

To be heard is not the ultimate end of the speaker's efforts, but being heard is requisite to the achievement of his purpose. In a Friends' meeting on a summer day a speaker maundered on inaudibly for three quarters of an hour. On the "high seat" was one greatly respected for piety and noted for the pertinency and quaintness of her remarks. When the unintelligible speaker had finished she rose and said, "Dear friends, I feel that we have had a time of perspiration mingled with meditation, and it is borne in upon me that the main object of speaking is to be heard."

Audibility not dependent on volume of sound.

It is possible to be heard in any building. No speaker ever attempted to address an audience who would not have been heard at twice the distance from the platform to the door had he discovered the house to be on fire. The feeblest organs, if capable of properly articulating a distinct vocal sound, will be effective at great distance; even a whisper can be heard at a distance of sixty-five feet. For some months an audience of several hundred listened to a pastor who could not speak above a whisper, yet was able by the aid of their intense and loving attention to make himself heard.

Many are unintelligible because of loudness. A man partially deaf said to his pastor, "You speak so loudly that I cannot hear you." A peculiar effect is often produced after the first few minutes by a very loud speaker, especially if in monotone. Auditors are delighted to hear his strong, melodious voice, but after listening for a while they become conscious of difficulty, and before he closes have lost the power to attend. The impact upon the tympanum and upon the finer fibers within has dulled sensibility.

Smothered sounds and irritating contrasts.

A speaker should be heard easily. Many are incomprehensible on account of a habit of mouthing. Words are heard, but the mind cannot comprehend them as fast as they are uttered, owing to an unconscious but very real effort necessary to identify them. Some speakers employ but two tones, one low pitched and the other a piercing shriek, which they alternate with uniformity now and again with no regard to sense or length of the intervals. This results simply from the accumulation of energy under the excitement of public speech, the loud yells being an effort necessary to reestablish nervous equilibrium. Such speakers should learn to diffuse this accumulated energy progressively through the discourse. Others allow the voice to fall at the end of sentences, and occasionally on emphatic words. Two celebrated professors in the same institution respectively il-

lustrated these errors in utterance; the first, until his immense intellectual and moral power absorbed their attention, threw strangers almost into convulsions of mirth; the other was not heard by more than a third of the audience, those who did hear being delighted.

Many speakers who are easily heard have little voice. They are unable to talk down an uproarious, hostile mob, but in assemblies that wish to hear them they can be understood in the largest buildings. Other orators of high grade, possessing powerful voices, for the sake of emphasis often lower their tones on special words, which, nevertheless, are heard by the whole audience. There are speakers not ordinarily easily heard who, when obliged to speak to the audience upon a matter unconnected with the discourse, are understood without difficulty.

On the stilts of self-consciousness.

I was present at a large political meeting in Exeter, N. H., where the presiding officer was a highly respected citizen, who was a member of the bar, and had represented the State in Congress and the Federal Government in an important office. The orator was General N. P. Banks, at that time Speaker of the Federal House of Representatives. A nobler voice than his no public speaker ever possessed—an organ-toned basso of unusual range. The chairman delivered the opening address in a strained tone, somewhat higher than

his natural pitch, which, though the matter was excellent, did not command the attention because of the difficulty of hearing; even upon the platform he was not easily heard. While General BANKS was speaking "certain lewd fellows of the baser sort" were running in and out, making confusion near the door. The president, thinking it his duty to reprove them, requested General BANKS to pause a moment, and, in a perfectly natural tone, audible in every part of the house, made some remarks to the effect that the reputation of Exeter was at stake, and that he would be obliged to those persons either to remain quiet or to absent themselves permanently.

The newspaper report showed the contents of the chairman's opening speech to be as worthy of being heard as any part of the magnificent oration which it introduced. Had he delivered it as he made these remarks, the assembly, instead of showing restlessness, would have been charmed.

None compelled to listen.

To attain high success the speaker must be heard agreeably, and, if possible, his voice be musical; under no circumstances should he be content to allow it to remain rough, harsh, or grating. The vital importance of this appears from the fact that all hearing is voluntary. Generally, outside of prisons and places of compulsory instruction, the presence of the auditor is voluntary. To assume that, in the absence of an in-

tense desire to hear, human beings are capable of sustained attention to sounds which are repellant, is as unreasonable as to believe that usually they are longing to learn what they should know, or to be told what to do. If a voice is unpleasant, men will not give attention; if it is very disagreeable, they will make intentional or unconscious efforts not to hear.

CHAPTER XXI

The Voice

Foundation principles.

A KNOWLEDGE of certain facts relating to the formation and sound of the human voice is essential to its intelligent cultivation, and these are more easily understood by the aid of sound-producing instruments. Why are the tones of the clarionet, flute, and violin, vibrating in the same key, different? TYNDALL assumes that if their pure fundamental tones were detached, they would be undistinguishable, but the dissimilar admixture of their tones in the respective instruments renders their *clang-tints* diverse. By the clang-tint he means the result of the primary tone and the harmonics or overtones sounding at the same time, and by the admixture of the tones in the different instruments he means that the shape and character of the sounding boards connected with them renders them diverse. Professor ZAHM* shows how the softness and richness of the tones of the harp and guitar result chiefly from their being plucked with the finger, and the shriller and more tinkling sounds of the zither and the mandolin from their being plucked with a point of wood or metal. The pure, rich tones of

*Sound and Music.

the piano follow from the striking of the strings with soft, elastic hammers of felt, and the extraordinary overtones, both high and low, which give the notes of the violin their charm are produced by bowing.

Limitations of the phonograph.

I asked Mr. Edison why the tones imitated by the phonograph were so unsatisfactory. Accent and emphasis are rendered to the least peculiarity in pronunciation, and a certain similarity exists in the sound emitted by the instrument and the speaker's voice, yet the ear is not satisfied. He replied that it is because the phonograph does not give the overtones. He is endeavoring to construct a machine which will give them perfectly, and believes that he is on the verge of completing an instrument which will reproduce every quality of the most exquisite voices.

The fundamental tone of the voice is caused by the vibration of the chords, but it is affected by the length of the vocal pipe and a variety of circumstances, many of which are common to all human beings, and others, peculiar to the individual. These are explained at length in the few truly scientific works on elocution and voice production, but more thoroughly in the best and most elaborate works on physiology.

> Men's voices, like their souls, are set in different keys:
> In joyful or in minor chords tune they life's harmonies;

but the clang-tint of the human voice is usually

agreeable and so thoroughly individual as to be one of the things most easily remembered. A gentleman who had not seen the present chaplain of the United States Senate for forty years thus addressed the man, whose soul-sight is penetrating, but whose eyesight is gone forever:

Tone impress

"Dr. MILBURN, do you know me?"

"Yes; you are JOHN, son of my old friend, the publisher."

This was made possible by the clang-tint. The voice may undergo changes in whatever is dependent upon its accidents, but so long as one speaks without an attempt to disguise the undertone it is sufficient to distinguish him from every other human being.

That training is necessary and productive of such gratifying results is because the resonance of the voice, except the tone produced by the vibration of the vocal chords, depends upon the position of the vocal organs, the shape and condition of the mouth, throat, chest, head, and the other marvelous sounding-board passages, together with the lining membrane;—all constructed with infinite skill.

It is possible that perfect vocal chords may be comparatively useless because of the imperfection of the sounding machinery. In the evolution fully as much depends upon the arrangements for magnifying and modulating the sound as upon the string itself.

Bell's experiment.

Alexander Graham Bell demonstrated this when professor in the Boston University. Before a class in the School of Oratory he adjusted the vocal cavities according to the principles of visible speech, and then produced sound by tapping on the throat, placing a lead pencil across the larynx, altering the cavity of the mouth by changing the position of the tongue, then snapping the lead pencil with his finger, and without making any vocal effort ran up and down the scale with apparent facility.*

The needs of training are best illustrated by the defects which all can perceive in others' voices, yet rarely when they exist in their own. The advantages of training are best seen when defects under its influence disappear.

Defects removed by training.

Many voices are spoiled by the misuse of breath. Too much air passing over the vocal chords will give to the voice a reedy sound, which diminishes its carrying power. In order to produce a clear and strong tone there must be a habit of physical exercise in pure air, a capacity for both deep and rapid breathing, and a voluntary control of the muscles regulating inhalation and expiration. This is in some degree possessed by all almost from birth, and during the sports of childhood maintained and increased. It is retained by the workingman, whether mechanic or farmer.

* Kirby, *Vocal and Action Language, Culture and Expression.*

But unless systematic exercises are taken at fixed intervals and for regular periods, a sedentary life is unfavorable to it.

All vocalization being the result of forced breathing, the power of controlling the muscles so as to determine the pressure of the air cannot be acquired without special practice. Contrast the ability in this respect of a trained and an untrained singer. The one, by a combination of economy and endurance, will sing with a single breath twice as many notes as can a person of double physical power who has not been trained.

The effects of training seem almost incredible. Professor KIRBY states that the late Dr. GUILMETTE exhibited to him several photographs taken at different periods of his life. One taken in his younger days showed shoulders bent forward, chest flat, the general appearance indicating a delicate man. The others showed successive stages of development after he began practice until the time when he stood before Professor KIRBY, erect, with deep and broad chest. He could inhale three hundred and eighty cubic inches with one breath, and his voice was immense.

Skillful detection.

TALMA, "the first tragedian of his time, and the regenerator of dramatic art," had an unsatisfactory voice, but his chief defect in his early days was an inability to control the muscles of respiration. After some passages he was so exhausted that im-

mediately after leaving the stage he was compelled to lean against a wing for support, panting, puffing, and blowing like an overworked ox. There was at that time an actor named DORIVAL, who, though thin, consumptive looking, and weak voiced, played certain tragic parts with success. TALMA said to himself: "I am ten times stronger, yet he goes through his work with ten times less fatigue. I must ask him for his secret." DORIVAL put him off with a compliment.

"O, Monsieur TALMA, you are too successful a tragedian to stand in need of any poor lesson of mine."

"Where there's a will there's a way."

This piqued TALMA, who, determining to solve his secret, took a seat in the prompter's box, where he could not be seen. At the end of an important passage he left his hiding place, exclaiming, "Hurrah! I have got you now!" But what had he discovered? Nothing more nor less than this—that his rival's art depended on his knowing how to take breath.

I abridge the narrative of LEGOUVÉ, *Art of Reading*, but the words of TALMA are quoted verbatim:

"He always made sure to take breath just before his lungs were entirely exhausted of air; and in order effectively to conceal his continuous inhalations, which would have broken up his speech and even often interrupted the current of his emotion, he took in breath more particularly

before the a's, or e's, or o's, never before the i's or u's. That is to say, only at the very place where the mouth, already open, permitted him to breathe so lightly as never to be heard by the audience."

Subsequently TALMA reduced all his rules on breathing to one maxim: "Every artist who lets himself run out of breath is nothing more than mediocre."

Disgusting fault.

Among the most common faults is nasality. Commonly such speakers are said to "speak through the nose," but the opposite is the case, as one may discover by compressing his nostrils while speaking. The unpleasant effects upon the sound of the voice produced by a cold in the head or by chronic catarrh are explained by the stoppage of the passages. But one without a cold or other disease may have acquired in school, by imitation, or in any of several ways, the habit of contracting the muscles of the throat or of those which regulate the passage from the throat to the nose, and so produce this disagreeable tone.

A master of the theory and practice of vocal music had no difficulty in securing a situation in New York as a bass singer, but after a short time was discharged. He felt bitterly this unaccountable evidence of dissatisfaction, and said to a friend, "I am a victim of race prejudice; I am a Hebrew."

"No," said his friend, "your voice has a horrible nasal twang, that does not always show itself in such a selection as you will sing to secure the position, but is frequently heard, especially if you are enfeebled nervously or otherwise. What you need to do is to sing into a phonograph, and then study your own voice."

This he did, and for the first time heard his voice as it sounded to others. He acknowledged at once the existence of grounds for dissatisfaction, and set himself to train out those offensive sounds.

A bad habit and its modifications.

Dentality is another fault. The teeth are held so close together that the effect is to chop the sound in pieces, making it impossible to pronounce vowels, which are the carrying sounds. By this habit, in combination with a compression of the throat, a squeaking tone is frequently caused. Add to this a drawl, with a raising of the pitch, and a squealing sound is the consequence.

In some cases the shape of the movable jaw, or its relation to the muscles attached to it, is such that it is impossible for the speaker, until he is conscious of the defect, to develop a full, clear sound of O without so compressing the vocal tube as to impart to the voice a rasping quality.

Bimetallic voices.

Metallic voices are quite common. For years I supposed that in most instances the clang-tint was responsible for this; but observation and ex-

periment have convinced me that this is not the case. The voice of the late William Morley Punshon, a noted English preacher and lecturer, struck me disagreeably when I heard it for the first time. Its metallic quality was so pronounced that it suggested nothing but a tin pan struck by a heavy iron spoon. During the preliminary services, and for five minutes after he began to preach, this tone continued, gradually wearing away, and from then until the close of the discourse it was not perceptible, but in the reading of the final hymn it was again noticeable. The difference was caused by the fact that as his feelings became excited he opened his mouth more widely and breathed more deeply.

Legouvé gives an account of the manner in which his father, a professor in the College of France, and an excellent reader, was dealt with by a hostile critic and a candid friend. The criticism was this :

Curious, instructive, and inimitably told.

"Yesterday Monsieur Legouvé gave us two scenes from 'Racine,' his voice as sepulchral as ever."

Legouvé then proceeds :

"A good-natured friend, Parseval-Grandmaison, the elegant poet, seeing the article, instantly says to himself: 'Poor Legouvé will be put out by this slander. Really I must run and console him a little.'

"He finds my father stretched on the sofa, and looking decidedly out of sorts.

"'Ah, my dear PARSEVAL, is that you?'

"'Hello! LEGOUVÉ. What's the matter? A little sick, eh?'

"'No-o, throat a little sore—that's all! But say, PARSEVAL, what do you think of my voice?'

"'I think it is a splendid voice—a first-class voice.'

"'Yes, yes—but how would you characterize it? What is its style? Its quality? Would you call it—hem—a brilliant voice?'

"'Brilliant—well, no. Brilliant is not exactly the epithet by which I would characterize your voice. I should rather call it a sonorous voice.'

"'Sonorous—that's it, isn't it? Mine is a sonorous voice?'

"'Well—though your voice is decidedly a sonorous voice, sonorous is not exactly the best term to describe it. Perhaps it would be better to call your voice a grave voice.'

"'Grave—well! Grave be it. But not dismal?'

"'Dismal! O, not at all dismal! By no manner of means dismal! However—occasionally—'

"'But you can't call it a hollow voice, eh? or a croaking voice, or a cavernous voice, or—?'

"'Certainly not! Neither hollow, nor croaking, nor cavernous! Far from it! Still—'

"'Enough,' cried my father, bursting into a merry laugh. 'I see you have not only read this infernal critic's article, but you actually believe his criticism! Sepulchral is the epithet you are looking for, isn't it? Ha! ha! ha!'

"The story is not without its moral. From that day my father was exceedingly careful and even cautious regarding the use of his low notes; by mingling them judiciously with the other two registers he at last succeeded in reaching that natural variety of intonations which is at once a charm for the hearer and a rest for the reader."

Voices are heard from pulpits and in courts of justice to which each of those terms mentioned by LEGOUVÉ could be accurately applied; and others that could be correctly described as "rasping," and for some no term is so appropriate as "maudlin." All these could be improved, and most of them so modified that only the critical listener would suppose them to be other than the speaker's natural tones.

Heredity overcome.

I inherited from a long line of bass singers a low-pitched voice, and an activity of the nervous system which disposed to rapid utterance. Somewhat vain of so heavy a voice, I lost no opportunity of singing, and on becoming a public speaker continued to use it in speech, always with a rapid utterance. The consequence was serious injury to the vocal organs, making it almost impossible

to speak without danger. An itinerant elocutionist, of whom I took a few lessons, told me that it would be necessary either to raise the pitch of my speaking voice or greatly to diminish the speed of my utterance. I believed neither to be possible, but was assured that both could be done.

He perceived that in an ordinary building I began to speak on the key of *g*, and declared that it must be raised to *c*, and by this method : Each morning for a half hour I was to speak upon *c*, avoiding a singing tone ; and I was to begin upon *c* whenever I spoke in public. The former I complied with, and pained the ears of all in the house by ejaculations of every possible kind upon *c*. But so prone was I to forget myself and begin to read a hymn or a text upon *g* that for a while I took a tuning fork into the pulpit, and, unperceived by the audience, struck it so as to catch the note.

Practice makes perfect.

This practice gave remarkable results. As one must speak to his keynote as well as sing to it, a range of at least five notes higher than I had been able to attain either in singing or speaking was gradually acquired. Correspondingly, the strength of the low tones diminished. But to this day, if I omit public speaking for a month, and during the same time sing bass a half hour a day, the original tones return, it becomes possible to reach low *b* and sometimes *a*, and the original tendency to a low pitch reappears on rising to speak.

Some years later I met a noted bass singer whose voice was as really manufactured as was that of DUPREZ. He had been taunted by a companion with having a woman's voice, and immediately devoted himself to the study of the voice and to the theory and practice of bass singing. Confirmatory instances.

Probably no speaker now living possesses a deeper or more melodious voice than Dr. WILLIAM H. MILBURN. In an article upon the late Professor TAVERNER he thus refers to himself :

"I knew a man who, when he began work with the professor, weighed about one hundred and fifteen pounds, the girth of his chest was twenty-eight inches, and his health infirm. He now weighs one hundred and seventy pounds, his chest measure is between forty and forty-two inches, his voice has gained nearly an octave, chiefly in the bass notes, and his health is robust and as nearly perfect as often falls to the lot of a son of ADAM. This change is not to be attributed wholly to the TAVERNER system, but that gave a start in the right direction."

That system Dr. MILBURN summarizes thus :

"It begins with the thorough training of the voice until every note that can be produced by the vocal chords is perfectly formed and delivered to the organs of articulation, which must always be schooled to give every vowel and consonant sound of the language in its true form ; and in corre-

spondence with these the ear must be tuned and disciplined to detect and castigate all falsity, provincialism, conventionalism, and other impurities of tone, all limping and impotence of articulation. To this end the whole breathing apparatus, from the abdominal muscles and diaphragm to the clavicle, must be got well in hand and work automatically. Step by step with these vocal exercises the mind must proceed to grasp and use its parts of the work, inviting the sensibilities and affections to loan their aid, and the will to reinforce them with its energy."

Light from a mystifying art.

Ventriloquism illustrates this subjects. Most imagine, as the etymology of the word implies, that the fictitious ventriloquist's voice, proceeds from the abdomen, whereas it is formed in the inner parts of the mouth and throat. Many of those who know this fancy that it depends on a particular structure or organization of those parts, which is also an error.

The true definition of ventriloquism is that adopted by the French Academy : "The art consists in the accurate imitation of any given sound *as it reaches the ear.*"

What the ventriloquist learns to do in imitation of the voices of sub-animals and speakers whose sounds are brutish is natural to many who distort the muscles, cannot properly use the tongue, and who hold the under jaw rigid.

CHAPTER XXII

Voice Strengthening and Articulation

The self-evident disadvantage of a weak voice or of speaking habitually in a feeble manner is the not being heard at all or with difficulty. But a more subtle and pernicious consequence is that it reacts unfavorably upon the mode of thought and expression. Professor H. N. Day, who believes that this effect finds frequent illustration, thinks that a naturally imaginative and highly impassioned style may—by the continual influence of the conviction that one is unable properly to deliver strongly impassioned discourses—be changed gradually into one that is dry and tame.

Why strengthening exercises are needed.

No one by nature, or as the result of ordinary exercises, finds his vocal organs in such a condition relatively to adaptation and energy as to be able to meet the demands of a protracted public speech. The most robust man, unaccustomed to it, would be more wearied by reading in public one hour, in a loud voice, than he would by sawing wood for twice that time. And this is not all—the voice would grow husky, and an irritation of the throat, perhaps of a serious nature, might be set up.

In public speech various muscles on which in ordinary life there is no strain are brought into

action. Some of these have no exercise worthy the name, except it is undertaken for purposes of training. The muscles of the chest and of the abdomen must be strong. Much is said about the diaphragm, and its importance cannot be exaggerated; but the dorsal, intercostal, and antecostal muscles play an important part, and lung exercises must be taken systematically. One may by practice in a gymnasium pile up mountains of muscle upon his arms, shoulders, and chest without adding much to his lung capacity, and even be on the verge of a decline.

Means of increasing vocal capability.

Those vital organs must be expanded by the air which they are intended to breathe. Gymnastic exercises intelligently used promote this, since the more physical effort, the deeper or more frequent will be the respiration. The pedestrian who climbs hills, breathing meanwhile exclusively through the nostrils, exercises his lungs, and there is no form of effort more beneficial. Walking on level ground, though a healthful practice, will not give the capacity of breathing required. Cycling, a wholesome general exercise, is not especially healthful for the lungs, and because of bad methods of riding is often harmful to them. The position is unfavorable, since the abdominal and coordinate muscles are seldom free to do the best work. The cyclist, the pedestrian, and the equestrian require additional exercises for the

chest, arms, back, and diaphragm. Cycling in most parts of the country cannot be practiced in the winter and early spring, hence during that period special exercises should be taken for the upper parts of the body.

A useful way to exercise the lungs, within the reach of everyone, is systematic inhaling through the nostrils and expelling through the mouth, the lips being held firmly in the position for whistling. One who speaks, standing, several hours each day, as did WESLEY, WHITEFIELD, and others, needs no exercises for this purpose. But those who speak at intervals of a week or more should not neglect breathing exercises.

Instrumental aid.

There is a tube which many have used to advantage, so constructed as to admit the air without obstruction, but requiring its expiration through a small orifice. After entering upon editorial work I spoke in public less frequently than before, and found a diminution of vocal energy, and, in the heat of summer, considerable reactionary physical fatigue followed protracted addresses to large audiences in the open air. I have for the last twelve years been in the habit of using the inhaling tube daily for several weeks before filling such engagements. As one of the chief sources of sustaining power I have recommended the tube to hundreds of speakers who have attested its value.

The great conservator of health is activity in the open air. This promotes a habit of deep breathing, purifies the blood and keeps it pure. As the voice is closely connected with the nerves, overwork and loss of sleep are among its most insidious foes.

The attitude in speaking should be erect; when words are being uttered the mouth should be well opened. An excellent method of vocal practice is to declaim with a cork an inch in length between the teeth. If there be pain, inconvenience, or any consciousness of the mechanism of vocalizing, something is wrong.

Particular directions.

Whenever possible the speaker should breathe through the nostrils. It is well for him thus to take a deep inspiration as he begins, and for the same purpose to utilize pauses.

I emphasize the statement that while speaking too low is a fatal impediment, it is detrimental to speak too loud; for the ear is pained, the attention distracted, emphasis defective or excessive, the nerves of the hearers irritated, and if the voice be in any degree strained, it will be neither sweet, soft, nor agreeable. The unnecessary labor devolving upon the speaker will in time unfavorably affect his health and even without this may effect a permanent change in his natural tones.

Nature and Art furnish a method of economizing the strength of the loud-voiced speaker, and

intensifying the effect of those very few feeble voices which from some constitutional cause are not amenable to strengthening treatment.

Lessons from the masters.

The most important word in the vocabulary of elocution is *articulation*. The distinct articulation of consonants is more important to the speaker than to the singer, and it is easier for the former. There has been much dispute whether the articulation of consonants or vowels should receive greater attention. The conclusion which I have reached is that consonants should be articulated distinctly, but not to the neglect of the vowels, in which inhere all the best qualities of the voice as well as its carrying power. In order to strengthen the voice and qualify the speaker to produce the vowel sounds effectively DELSARTE required his pupils to practice daily the syllables *po*, *la*, *mo* on every note within the compass of their voices.

REGNIER, "a master of masters," gave a prescription as simple as it is effective for perfecting the articulation. It is based upon what one would do if he wished to confide a secret to a friend, and was fearful of being overheard. "You face your friend exactly, and pronouncing your words distinctly, but in an underbreath, you command your articulation to convey them to your friend's eyes rather than his ears, for he is as carefully watching how you speak as he is intently

listening to what you say. Articulation having here a double duty to perform, that of sound as well as its own peculiar function, is compelled, as it were, to dwell strongly on each syllable, so as to land it safely within the intelligence of your hearer."

Another master says of this method: "In a very few months' steady practice at this exercise for a few hours a day you will find that your most obdurate articulatory muscles become flexible as well as strong; that they rise elastically and respond harmoniously to every movement of the thought and to every call of the pronunciation."

Serving a double purpose.

The enunciation of new words, or of such as one discovers that he has been in the habit of mispronouncing, should be connected with this practice; thus from either point of view the time will be well expended.

Breathing exercises without the use of words are often distasteful and wearisome, which accounts for the fact that they are so seldom practiced sufficiently to avail much. There is no reason why one should not produce tones while practicing them.

If one possess the other qualities, he need not be deterred, by the fact that nature has allotted to him a feeble voice, from entering upon any profession essential to which is the power of being distinctly heard in public speech.

ROBERT HALL, one of the most celebrated of pulpit orators, had a feeble voice, which he made still weaker by working upon the theory that momentum is the result of power and velocity, and that the less power, the more velocity there should be. But, in spite of these impediments, because of the distinctness of his articulation he was heard with pleasure.

Splendid triumphs over nature's disability.

EDMUND KEAN, one of the greatest actors that ever lived, had by nature a conspicuously feeble voice. WILBERFORCE, a power in Parliament, was little more than a pygmy, and his voice was not only weak, but disagreeably shrill.

W. J. FOX, a famous preacher of South Place Chapel, London, "whose voice was neither loud nor strong, was heard in every part and all over Covent Garden Theater, when he made anti-corn-law orations there, by the clearness with which he pronounced the final consonants of the words he spoke."*

"MONVEL, one of the most famous of French actors, had scarcely any voice. He had not even teeth, and yet, according to high authority, not only did his hearers never lose one of his words, but no artist had ever more pathos or fascination. The secret of his success was his exquisite articulation."

Of ANDRIEUX, LEGOUVÉ says: "He was one of

* *Public Speaking and Debate*, by G. J. Holyoake, revised edition, p. 10.

the most finished orators I have ever heard; his voice was worse than weak—it was feeble, ragged, husky. How did he win such triumphs in spite of such serious drawbacks? Splendid articulation again! By making you listen to him he made you hear him. His incomparable articulation made not to listen to him an impossibility." *

These all possessed great intellectual and emotional powers, determination of character, and ambition, and took the pains to make the utmost of their limited vocal resources.

Half a loaf better than no bread.

Notwithstanding all this has been accomplished, there are thousands of ministers and lawyers whose abilities, though not sufficient to achieve success when impeded by imperfect or feeble articulation, are adequate to admit of their accomplishing incredibly more than they do, were they assiduously to cultivate their voices upon rational principles.

* *Art of Reading*, p. 51.

CHAPTER XXIII

Pitch and Tones

The pitch of the human voice depends chiefly upon the number per second of vibrations of the vocal chords, and the length, thickness, and degree of tension of the chords determine the number of vibrations. The greater the length, the lower the pitch; the more tense the chords, the higher the pitch. It is held by some that the pitch can be influenced by the ascent or descent of the larynx, which shortens or lengthens the vocal pipe.

Perception of pitch.

The possession of power to discern pitch by the ear, and to remember it, at least in some degree, is of vital importance. It is a natural gift, and high authorities do not believe that it is capable of cultivation to any considerable extent. R. H. M. Bosanquet, Professor of Acoustics in the Royal College of Music, London, in the discussion of its scientific basis, says: "Roughly speaking, and in the absence of reliable statistics, we may say that the possession of the absolute pitch is distributed as follows: Say one per cent possess it; one per cent are entirely destitute of it, so as to be said to have no ear; and the remaining ninety-eight per cent possess it in a more or less modified form."

Charles Darwin was unable to distinguish discord from harmony. Most persons, however, have this faculty sufficiently to distinguish between high, low, and medium pitch in the ordinary use of the voice.

The medium pitch should be the basis of speech. From it one may rise or fall, according to intellectual and emotional requirements. Height and depth are necessary. "He who has no height in the compass of his voice can only with difficulty make men fear or rejoice; he who has no depth to his voice cannot make men adequately feel the solemnity or the majesty of any truth," says Professor H. M. Whitney, in an admirable paper on "The Ideal of Public Speaking."

Relative value of the medium pitch.

It was a maxim of Molé, a celebrated actor of the last century, that "The middle voice is the father; without it no posterity." Legouvé, in commenting on this, says: "The low notes are not without great power, the high notes are occasionally brilliant; but they should be employed only when certain unusual effects are to be produced." He compares the high notes to cavalry; their province to make dashing charges and initiate strong attacks. The low he likens to artillery, as "denoting strength, effort, the putting forth of unusual power." But "the middle voice is our infantry." The precept, therefore, which he most earnestly impresses is: "To the middle voice ac-

cord the supremacy first, last, and always." In pointing out the effects of employing the high notes too often or too continuously he declares that "they wear out, are falsified and made squeaky." The abuse of the lower notes infuses monotony, gloom, dullness, heaviness.

Henry Ward Beecher said to me: "What a speaker most needs is to strengthen his ordinary conversational voice, without giving it a hard, firm quality; that is, without destroying its flexibility and power of adaptation to every mood."

To improve the middle voice.

The best practical method, requiring no teacher, of strengthening the middle voice I found to be the discussion with a personal friend, at a distance of two hundred feet in the open air, of questions on which we were conscientiously opposed. Our friendship and the fact that we were alone prevented undue excitement and the involuntary use of querulous or vociferating tones. The subjects were more or less abstruse, and in so conversing for half an hour two or three times a week my tones were improved, and an extraordinary effect was wrought upon his, for he had always made too much use of the higher notes. The excitement of speaking had caused him to raise his tone before he had spoken five minutes, and higher and higher until it became almost inaudible; this defect was remedied.

It is a fine art to be able to lower one's pitch.

Some scream on to the end; from sheer exhaustion others spasmodically fall to a low note, but immediately they forget themselves and run up to the same pitch, vociferating there till out of breath.

Art of changing the pitch.

Berryer, one of the greatest of French advocates, seldom lost a case, but told a friend that one day he lost a very good cause by unconsciously starting his speech in too high a key. His temples soon felt the unusual fatigue of the larynx; from the temples it passed to the brain; the strain being too great, the brain gave way; thought became confused, language disarranged, and utterance indistinct.

There is a gentleman in an important representative position whose elocution is nearly perfect, and for the first ten minutes much in the style of Wendell Phillips. After that he rises in pitch to tones resembling those of an angry man, and the members of the deliberative body in which he speaks cease to listen.

To avoid this evil one should retain sufficient self-possession to know whether he is speaking too high. He should break himself of the common habit of raising his voice in the beginning of a sentence, and fix in his mind the conviction that without raising the pitch any note may be strengthened by an additional exercise of power. If one finds himself too high, practice will enable him to change the pitch.

Facility of transition.

An excellent method is to introduce a brief quotation. This makes it natural to lower the pitch, and in the same tone he can add a commentary upon the quotation and retain the lower key. Professional elocutionists have no difficulty in doing this. They pass from grave to gay, read comedy and tragedy, change their keys according to the subject, and read to the key until the selection is finished.

It is not difficult to master this common defect if once the attention is fixed upon it with determination. Should other methods fail, introduce an anecdote; this will compel it. A lawyer thus embarrassed resorted to an ingenious stratagem. He paused, demanded more air, compelled the janitor to raise a window, then complained that he had raised it too high, had it adjusted to suit him, and resumed his speech in a conversational manner.

In all speech the fundamental requisite is the effect upon the ear, for its influence upon the emotions depends upon the report made by the ear to the higher regions of the brain, whence it reacts upon the entire nervous and circulatory system. The singer has this constantly in view, but there is reason to believe that comparatively few speakers have ever thought seriously of how their voices sound to their hearers.

Virtue and vice of the semitone.

Improper use of the semitone is a common cause of oratorical debility. "The semitone is the vocal sign of tenderness, petition, complaint, and doubtful supplication, but never of manly confidence and the authoritative self-reliance of truth. It is this which betrays the sycophant, and even the crafty hypocrite himself. They assume a plaintive persuasion, or a tuneful cant, not merely to imply that they are prompted by a kindly and affectionate state of mind, but sometimes because they unconsciously distrust or despise themselves, and are therefore influenced by the mental state of servility." *

Rush therefore teaches that whenever the semitone is used to indicate a state of mind which does not call for it suspicion should be awake, and illustrates his meaning by the statement that a beggar should "by the instinct of his voice plaintively implore; and it is equally a law of nature, which abhors hypocrisy no less than a vacuum, that he should give the truth of his *narrative* in a more *confident* intonation." †

An analogous inflection.

In its effects the upward inflection is closely akin to the semitone, and is also an indication of insincerity or conscious weakness. In the opinion of Professor Taverner the continual use of the upward inflection implies hypocrisy, and he displayed what seemed almost an intuitive

* Rush, on the Voice, p. 570. † *Ibid.*

power of discerning character. Upon hearing certain ministers he declared them insincere; his judgment was proved true, for some years later they were justly exposed to public contempt. Listening to a noted congressional orator, then in high repute as a lawyer and legislator, and a deliverer of addresses in educational institutions, most frequently at those devoted to the education of women, but since disgraced by the exposure of his protracted hypocrisy and licentiousness, he said: "That man is a hypocrite; there is nothing genuine about him; the open, shameless sinner is genuine, but he is fraudulent throughout."

"Why this harsh judgment?"

"That regular upward inflection is an infallible proof of hypocrisy in a man of ability."

The tone unchanged becomes unfitting.

No incongruity is more enfeebling than the use of a plaintive tone continuously in extempore prayer, reading of the Scriptures, or delivery of a sermon or address of any kind. Yet it is not uncommon to hear men in prayer giving thanks, praising God, confess sins, implore pardon, pray for the delivery of a country from an appalling calamity, in the same unvarying tone suited indeed to penitence and deprecation, but not to any other state which the words of the speaker express.

Even a funeral discourse, if the object be in any part support to the sinking spirit, should contain

some sentiments which require calm, confident assertion and a hopeful spirit.

Acoustic properties of buildings.

LEGOUVÉ gives a suggestive account of his first venture in writing and reading poetry. It was soon after he left college. He was to read at the *Conservatoire de Musique et de Declamation.* Before going he read the composition to his guardian, BOUILLY, who said to him: "Dear boy, you are hardly doing justice to your goods. Better call on my friend FEBVE and get him to give you a few lessons." Paying a high tribute to FEBVE, LEGOUVÉ quotes one passage from him that states a principle which, till I found it there, I thought I had discovered, and on which I had long acted. It is this: "The auditorium of the Conservatoire resembles an excellent Stradivarius. No violin surpasses it in harmonious resonance. The sounds that you send forth are returned to you by its melodious walls, fuller, rounder, sweeter. Your voice can play on these walls as your fingers play on the keys of a fine musical instrument. Be very careful, therefore, to avoid too high a pitch. And lay down this rule as a principle: always adapt and proportion your voice not only to the size of the hall in which you speak, but also to its acoustic properties."

The acoustic properties of most edifices are imperfect. But these defects generally have a physical cause which admits of being guarded

against by the adaptation of the speaker's position and tone.

Practical application of science.

Probably the worst building in the United States, acoustically considered, is the beautiful Memorial Church at St. Augustine, Fla. There, unless properly managed, the noblest voices are reduced to the level of the feeblest and most unmusical, and a babel of echoes results. Yet by scientifically estimating the situation an experienced speaker, without unusual strength of voice, ascertained the key, and by preserving a monotone made his words audible throughout the edifice. An acute musical ear and, in the absence of that, experiment will enable a speaker to determine what tone is requisite, and he should feel for it in beginning until he finds it.

There is, however, one remarkable fact explicable by the laws of vibration. Two buildings may be of exactly the same size, the walls of similar materials and thickness, and the fixed contents of the halls the same, yet one may be acoustically perfect and the other inferior. The architect of several imposing churches and music halls informed me that the chance of this is not great, but is sufficient to keep him anxious till experiment demonstrates success.

Frequent changes of position should be avoided, but, when necessary, should not be made with rapidity. When a speaker utters a word the air

vibrates in all directions, but its rate of motion is greatest in front; those before him receive the volume of sound at its greatest force, those to the right and left have equal facilities for hearing at the same distance, but less than those in front. All will in a little while become accustomed to such sound waves as they receive. Should the speaker suddenly turn to either side of the house, the vibrations will come into collision, and for some moments, in a large building, all will be confused and many words lost. Hence changes of position should be made during pauses.

An irregular or inadequate reflection of sound waves, in many buildings, accounts for the difficulty of speaking. The ventilation of the second House of Parliament in London was so arranged that in the middle of the hall there was a draft of air from the floor to the ceiling, and it was impossible for speakers to be heard in opposite sides of the room. Since the form as well as the length of the vibrations depends much upon the way in which the tone begins, which is not the same in all persons, it follows that in some rooms one place may not be equally well adapted to two individuals as a point from which to speak.

Rhythm. The natural tendency of earnestness is to become rhythmical. Abbott and Seeley say: "When we talk or write continuously about any

subject that appeals to the passions we gratify a natural instinct by falling into a certain regularity. Both the voice and the arrangement of the words fall under this regular influence; the voice is modulated, and the words are regulated in a kind of flow called rhythm. Without rhythm the expression of passion becomes spasmodic and painful, like the sobbing of a child. Rhythm averts this pain by giving a sense of order controlling and directing passion. Hence rhythm is in place wherever speech is in passion and intended at the same time to be pleasurable; an impassioned speech without rhythm is, when long continued, unpleasing." *

The pleasing "undress" of familiar conversation.

In ordinary conversation there is usually no perceptible "tone," except with monologists, who, like COLERIDGE, practically preach whenever they converse. But rhythm carried too far becomes a "tone," and this, when characteristic of a leader, may be intentionally or unconsciously imitated by his followers.

THEODORE WATTS, an English writer, affirms that "the rhythm of language is the rhythm of life itself, and that it is deeper than all the rhythms of art. It can be caught," he teaches, "by prose as well as by poetry, such prose, for instance, as that of the English Bible and of SHAKESPEARE'S greatest writings. There is nothing more and

* *English Lessons for English People*, section 91.

nothing less than the meter of that energy of the spirit, which surges within the bosom of him who speaks, whether he speak in verse or in impassioned prose."

Such was the origin, no doubt, of the early rhythms of all religious movements that began in deep emotion. The imitation of them by the successors of the prophets and preachers, after the emotion has subsided or freedom of utterance has been affected by conventional rules, is but a monotonous and powerless caricature.

Denominational tones.

Each denomination has its peculiar tone, and sometimes a special branch of a denomination has a special rhythm. That employed by what are called the Hard-shell Baptists, in the South and West, has been variously popularized. The Friends have a peculiar tone; this originated in awe inspired by a belief that they were receiving special spiritual aid. A recurring "ah" at the end of words, characteristic of many of the early Methodists—which JOHN WESLEY abominated and did all in his power to suppress—sprang from vehemence and loss of self-control, accompanied by exhaustion of breath, producing a positive gasp at the end of a sentence or when pauses were necessary to prevent convulsions.

Liturgical Churches do not escape. I do not refer to intentional intoning, which belongs to the sphere of music, but to the rendition of the service.

While reading an elaborate ritual with others, in a limited time, unconscious imitation has produced an easily recognized tone, which, as is the case with the characteristic tones of other denominations, some deliberately affect.

Unconscious imitators.

Imitation is at the base of modern denominational canting. Speaking of the influence of imitation, Dr. MILBURN says: "Educated people have been accustomed to sneer and laugh at the holy tone of the Hard-shell Baptist, old-fashioned Methodist, and Quaker preachers. But you may blindfold a man of quick ear, whose habits of close observation have been trained, and take him on a tour to visit the various churches in any of our cities, and in a few minutes he will tell you without fail, from the voice, its tones and mannerism in the giving out and reading of the hymns and of the Scripture lessons, and the utterance of the prayer, to what branch of the Church the person belongs, the part of the country from which he comes, the theological school in which he was trained, and even that where his earlier studies were pursued. Andover, Harvard, Yale, Princeton, Union, the General Theological Seminary, and all the rest have each their shibboleth; their speech bewrayeth them. They have forsaken nature and become the copyists of a man or a school—puppets, marionettes."

Severe as this seems, it is not extravagant.

Characteristic intonations.

The burden of what is to come contributes to the singing inflection. Instead of concentrating the mind wholly upon the sentence that is being uttered, the partial extemporizer anticipates, producing a degree of connection in some respects similar to that in the mind of a person improvising poetry. Many have a mistaken notion of oratorical manner, and in aiming at high, lofty, and swelling passages fall into a monotonous chant.

In all professions orators arise who have tones peculiar to themselves. A general cause is unusual weakness or strength of voice. He who has a weak voice finds a relief in singing his sentences, and his voice derives carrying power from it. One whose voice is unusually strong and whose feelings are excited finds difficulty of control, and thus resorts to the unconscious song.

All haranguers sing; they do not speak. According to PLUTARCH, JULIUS CÆSAR, while yet a youth, hearing some person read in a canting tone, said: "Are you reading or singing? If you sing, you sing badly; and if you read, you nevertheless sing."

Hurtful effects of the singing tone upon oratory.

The chief evil of a tone is that it destroys natural emphasis, frequently compelling the speaker to roar unimportant words, producing, in fact, upon his prose the effect which an excess of rhythm produces in poetry. To one of these speakers I listened, impressed by the tremendous

voice with which he uttered the word NOAH, as though angrily calling to him from a great distance. With pencil and paper I recorded his notes, and found that he sang with the precision of one who had learned a tune; that the most unimportant words were frequently emphasized, and the very key words of his sentences slurred. Toward the close of his discourse a general unconscious wave of the audience in harmony with his rhythm was perceptible, and a venerable woman near the speaker bowed her head at each pulsation with uniform regularity. This tendency is best seen in a Negro congregation, to which the repressing influence of mutual criticism has not extended. There the effect sometimes approximates the wonders of hypnotism.

The high monotone.

"Monotony is frequently the vice of speakers who address large assemblies, and who have not," says RUSH, "that clear vocality and distinct articulation which would insure the required reach of voice. They rise, therefore, to the utmost limit of the natural compass, and continue their current just below the falsetto." He pertinently adds: "This cause operates on the enthusiasts of the pulpit; on many of the speakers and always on the clerk of the lower house of the American Congress, where the scrambling cries to be first heard, with the uproar of titular *Honorables,* overrule the gentlemanly rights and duties of the

voice; but it is most remarkable in the mouth of the stump and scaffold demagogue, whose own political designs lead him to address great crowds in the open air!"

An infrequent but pernicious defect in vocalization is the use of the falsetto.

The irregular efflux of energy sometimes produces a reflex influence, which to a certain degree checks the speaker, and he instinctively takes refuge in the falsetto to escape a total suspension of voice. A sudden turning of the neck to the right or left, out of time with the movements of the vocal organs, will generally suffice to diminish the flow of energy.

The introduction of long recited passages having a rhythm of their own, unlike that natural to the speaker, frequently sends the voice of the speaker up the scale, and he does not descend until his speech is finished.

A lullaby.

Monotony on a low pitch exerts a soporific influence over an audience, which no strength of thought nor beauty of language can wholly counteract; and if there be regularly recurring minor notes, the most startling expressions lose their power; even to those who do not sleep the sounds bear no sense.

CHAPTER XXIV

Pronunciation

Accent.

THE extemporizer must pronounce correctly at all times and complete his sentences; for as in private so will he pronounce in public. Special attention should be paid to accent. This may be done by quantity or by a gliding pitch or stress. The ordinary idea of accents being the application of a greater force of voice upon a syllable is true, so far as it goes; but there are other very important modes whereby a syllable may be made conspicuous. In English, German, and Italian accent is of the utmost importance. "It is," says RUSH, "an abundant source of variety in speech; forms in part the measure of our versification; and when skillfully disposed, by the adjustment of a delicate ear, produces, with the assistance of quantity and pause, the varied rhythmic measure of prose."*

Standard of pronunciation

The standard of pronunciation should be somewhat elastic. Although a speaker should not indulge himself in pronunciations that have not the support of some generally accepted modern authority, he should endeavor to speak so that his hearers will not be diverted from the reception of

* Rush, on the Voice, p. 419.

the idea to the pronunciation of the word "Accessory" affords a good example. The prevailing practice, supported by almost all authorities, accents the second syllable; but there is considerable authority for accenting the first. In most assemblies, should a speaker say *ac*-cessory, a majority would recognize it as a new pronunciation, some wondering if it were correct, and many believing it to be wrong. When the common pronunciation is plainly wrong it would be advisable, in all cases where the emotions are to be stirred, to avoid the use of that word; but if used, it should be correctly pronounced, since the educated public speaker should regard himself as a conservator of the vernacular.

No mercy for the inaccurate.

There is no final authority in pronunciation, except the concurrence of several of the best orthoepists. I have found it an advantage to have within reach Cooley and Cull, Webster, Worcester, Walker, Johnson, Richardson, the Encyclopedic, the Standard, the Century, and several other dictionaries. I found Richardson's Dictionary valuable in its specialty. The Century in considerable degree fills the same place, besides having many features peculiar to itself as an encyclopedia of language as well as a dictionary. A comparison of all these works often affords much aid. As there are more than a thousand words on the pronunciation of which high author-

ities differ, a speaker should not blindly follow any, but leisurely compare and decide.

Omission by arrogant or uncandid orthoepists.

It is a serious defect in some of the best dictionaries that they do not inform the reader that different opinions are held and different usages prevail. The consequence is that those who consult exclusively a work with this defect are liable to suppose speakers to be in error who are supported by other authorities, and when corrections are not accepted and other authorities are adduced they are humiliated to find themselves suspected of pedantry, and their confidence in the standard which they had supposed final is shaken.

Pronunciation of proper names.

How to pronounce proper names imported from foreign languages is one of the chief difficulties; especially of young and inexperienced speakers.

Some maintain that such words should be pronounced according to the analogy of the language to which they belong. Several literary men met casually in a bookstore and fell into conversation, during which reference was made to Kamtschatka. The speaker uttered it after the manner taught in schoolbooks of half a century ago, giving the *ch* the sound of k. He was patronizingly corrected by a foreign traveler, who said, "Those who have been in that part of the world call it Kam-shatka." Somewhat nettled, the one interrupted after a short time turned the conversation to the south of France, and hesitating as though forgetting the

name of the city which presented MARIE ANTOINETTE with the magnificent couch preserved at Fontainebleau, was aided by the pedant who had just criticised him, "You mean Lyons." Whereupon he was promptly asked if the French pronounce the name of the city in that way.

Characteristic courtesy.

Cultivated Frenchmen pronounce the names of foreign countries after the analogy of their own language; if they speak other tongues, they conform to the analogy of the language to which the names belong. A simple rule with which it is possible to be consistent is this: Foreign names may be classified as having been or having not been anglicized. When one is speaking English those belonging to the former class should be pronounced as anglicized. Some have not been changed in the process; others, such as Paris and Vienna, have been; the rule is the same for names of persons. If a proper name has not been anglicized, the speaker should endeavor to pronounce it according to the analogy of the language to which it belongs. This in Bohemian, Hungarian, Russian, Arabic, and Welsh would defy most English speakers, whatever their general culture. Hence it is well to follow the pronunciation given in the authorities, and should there be none, to pronounce after the analogy of English, so far as possible.

All countries are becoming more and more cos-

mopolitan, the United States in particular. It is not easy to determine the pronunciation of the names of persons who have risen to eminence, for many names undergo a change, often in harmony with the desire of naturalized foreigners. The confusion which has resulted from the irregular application of rules to this subject is seen in the case of the name QUIXOTE and its derivatives. A lecturer who had traveled in Spain thought it necessary to speak of the hero of CERVANTES's immortal work as DON KEE-HO-TE, but several times during his lecture used the words quixotic and quixotically.

Provincialisms.

Dialectic pronunciations in different sections of the United States are sources of embarrassment to many speakers who find themselves in a region remote from that in which they received their early training. The most striking example relates to the Italian *a*. WALKER's Dictionary was for many years a standard authority in the Middle States. He was opposed to the introduction of that *a* into the language. Consequently, in the region of which Philadelphia may be said to be the center, including Princeton College during its early history, the word *calm* was pronounced so that it rhymed with clam. I was trained in that school, and on removing to New England found myself generally criticised for pronouncing the frequently recurring word *psalm* so as to make it

sound like an abbreviation of Samuel. This led me to a study of the subject, to which I found that NOAH WEBSTER had devoted much attention in the introduction to his dictionary, and I adopted the now general pronunciation of that class of words. On returning to my native town I was charged with affectation, and WALKER's Dictionary was produced to prove the allegation.

Disastrous blunders.

During the late war DANIEL S. DICKINSON, once Attorney General of the State of New York, changed his political attitude, and delivered an oration in support of the Federal Government. He was invited to Boston, and was received by a splendid audience. Near him on the platform were EDWARD EVERETT, WENDELL PHILLIPS, and others of distinguished position. In front of him, with several thousand, I sat, listening with intense interest. In order not to be misunderstood or misrepresented, the orator read all that he delivered upon political questions. Poetry he quoted from memory, and after a magnificent passage raised his head, pushed back his long white locks, and indicating by gestures the cardinal points, uttered in thrilling tones:

> "All are but parts of one stupen*duous* whole,
> Whose body Nature is, and God the soul."

Mr. EVERETT did not exhibit amusement or astonishment; his self-possession was absolute. Mr. PHILLIPS slightly raised his eyebrows; some in the

audience laughed, but Mr. DICKINSON did not know why they were amused.

At an institution in North Carolina a visiting clergyman, not educated in early life, was asked to offer prayer. He did so most appropriately. The solemn tones of his voice awed the students, and his pathetic references to the civil war, fresh in every mind, brought tears to many eyes. Toward the close of the prayer he uttered these words: "Bless this institution, and let thy special blessing rest upon our kind friends in the North, whose money sustains this great work; and grant thy blessing upon the school, upon the president, and the whole *corpse* of teachers."

Since a large part of verbal capital is accumulated before the period of self-criticism arrives, it is desirable to listen to public speakers of repute and to accomplished conversers, and note, for prompt investigation, the pronunciation of any word which differs from that with which one is familiar.

Constant vigilance the price of accuracy.

Also, in learning new words, it is important to ascertain their pronunciation, and before uttering them in public to pronounce them aloud frequently. This is the only effective method of correcting a discovered habit of mispronunciation. The lips will automatically pronounce as they have pronounced, and a new automatism must be made by practice with every such word.

Bitter but salutary.

This I learned by painful experience within eighteen months after beginning to speak regularly in public. The city in which I resided was the home of JOHN P. HALE, of national reputation as an orator. With his accomplished daughters he sometimes attended my service. One day, when contrasting the spiritual nature of heaven as revealed in the Scriptures with that described in the Koran, I exclaimed, "What is the heaven of Mohammed but a species of se-rag-lio?" The senator's countenance was impassive, but his daughters exchanged glances. The next day a friend said to me, "Did you say se-rag-lio yesterday?" "Yes," said I. He replied, with a quizzical smile, "Even I was classic enough to know that it is pronounced se-ral-yo." It was a mortifying but valuable lesson.

From that day I have not adopted a word acquired in reading without determining its pronunciation, and, where authorities differ, deciding by which to regulate my practice.

CHAPTER XXV

Tested Helps

The charm of individuality.

THE mastery of the art of reading has an excellent reactionary effect upon the extemporizer. That art, understood by few and often least known by those who fancy themselves proficient, requires exercise in the intelligent use of the pause, accent, and emphasis; practice therein modifies rate of utterance, tends to eradicate artificial tones, and improves articulation. That the extemporizer may derive benefit from the practice of reading he should bear in mind a distinction forcibly stated by A. MELVILLE BELL: "To a speaker the thought precedes the words, and dictates them; and hence the words, as they arise, express spontaneously the thought, with all its relations of subordination or prominence to the general subject. To a reader, the words precede the thought, and dictate it; but, as it is more easy to see the words which lie before the eye than to discern the thought which lies beneath the surface, there is a fatal facility of utterance, which tempts the reader to pass on to the words, without first making the thought his own, as it is in speaking." The student should be particular not to imitate peculiarities of his preceptor, nor to surrender his own

judgment concerning the proper method of expressing the author's ideas. It would be better to conceive an erroneous notion of the author's meaning and to read in harmony with it than to follow slavishly another's interpretation. The personal element in reading is so predominant that, except for the avowed purpose of impersonation, no one should attempt to read like another.

"An excellent oil."

The extemporizer should be willing to learn from critics either hostile or friendly. I had a habit of roaring, and on one occasion a venerable man said, "Will you accept a criticism from one who was in the ministry before you were born?" "Certainly." "Let me suggest, then, that in speaking of Christ's agony in the garden of Gethsemane you do not use the same tone which you employ in denouncing atrocious crimes." I made efforts toward reformation, but ten years later a man who had attained fame as an elocutionist uttered this sententious criticism, "You are too steadily stentorian to be effective."

Meeting my old preceptor, Professor TAVERNER, I engaged him to attend a service in the church of which I was pastor, sit where I could see him, and note all defects with a view to unsparing criticism. Later, to avoid being Tavernerized, I employed another expert, having a different system. He detected some of the defects which TAVERNER had pointed out, and declared that some

things which the former had inculcated were serious errors. This led to careful comparison of the views of these teachers. It is a misfortune to exhibit the indubitable impress of any preceptor.

Except in the case of some lawyers, lecturers, and ministers in constant practice, averaging several public appearances each week, and who abstain from talking in private because they have so much of it to do in public, I doubt if an instance can be found of a successful extemporizer who is not what would be called a "great talker." Sympathetic listening the inspiration of eloquence.

I tremble in view of the responsibility of the recommendation, and must implore the kind consideration of the victims of those who, in order to prepare for public work, will besiege all accessible ears. HARRY CAMPBELL, M.D., F.R.C.P., Physician of the North West London Hospital, recently read and published a paper on "The Therapeutic Aspects of Talking, Shouting, Singing, Laughing, Crying, Sighing, and Yawning." What is said upon talking, both upon its physical and psychic aspects, is concise and pertinent to my suggestion:

"As regards the psychic aspect of talking, thought becomes much more vivid if it finds expression, whether in speech, writing, music, or artistic production, than if it remains unexpressed. The physical effects of thought are more pronounced in talking than in writing. The cortical nervous discharges underlying it send a stream of energy Multum in parvo.

toward the muscles involved in speech and gesture, and both voice and gesture can be modified to convey subtle shades of thought and feeling which cannot find expression in writing. The very expression of these refinements enhances the vividness and intensity of mentation. Talking is for this reason stimulating, and its influence in this respect is in a measure proportional to the gesture accompanying it. Few things are more calculated to stimulate the body, to rouse it from lethargy, than 'animated' conversation. In talking, as in laughing, shouting, singing, and crying, inspiration is short, while expiration is prolonged, the exit of air being checked partly by obstruction in the glottis and partly, perhaps, by the action of the inspiratory muscles.

"The actual amount of work done in talking is far more than might at first sight be supposed, and should always be taken into account in reckoning the quantity of exercise taken during the day. The amount of talking done by barristers, politicians, and others enables them to dispense largely with exercise as ordinarily understood; for not only do they in this way expend a considerable amount of muscular energy, but they experience the manifold advantages of active respiratory movements continued for a long period together; indeed, I believe talking to be distinctly conducive to longevity. That talking involves a considerable ex-

penditure of energy is shown by the exhaustion which it induces in those who are nervously run down. Such are often greatly exhausted, even after a moderate day's talking. This exhaustion is due to mental as well as to muscular expenditure; indeed, in the very neurasthenic the bare process of thought may be an effort, and the mere effort to think may alone cause exhaustion; and if such is the case, how much more likely is the putting of thought into speech to do so, seeing that, apart from the muscular expenditure involved in speech, thought is so much more intent when spoken than when unexpressed.

"Talking is a beneficial exercise in heart disease, especially in those forms in which the blood tends to be dammed back upon the lungs. The good effect is here doubtless due to the increased amplitude of the respiratory movements and to the health thus afforded to the pulmonary circulation. It is for this reason that I always encourage talking in those suffering from passive engorgement of the lungs. 'The breathlessness due to dilatation,' observes Sir WILLIAM BROADBENT, 'is often relieved by exercise of the voice. I have met with numerous instances in which a clergyman has climbed into the pulpit with the utmost difficulty, and has not only preached a sermon comfortably, but has been all the better for it.' The good result, I take it, in these cases, is attributable to the deep in-

spiration required by the loud voice necessary to fill a large building."

Sir GEORGE A. MACFARREN, Professor of Music in the University of Cambridge, and author of the article on "Music" in the *Encyclopædia Britannica,* defines music as "an art which employs signs as a medium of artistic expression of whatever is not in the province of literature, of sculpture, of painting, of acting, or of architecture." After critically stating what is accomplished by the other arts he says that "Acting adds speech to the written words of the dramatist, which can only describe or state man's perceptions or impressions, and even qualifies their meaning by vocal inflections and illustrates it by changeful gesture. Music, and music alone, embodies the inward feelings, of which all other arts can but exhibit the effect."

Singer and speaker.

I maintain that the extemporaneous orator, when he reaches complete absorption, in a sense not true of the actor, as really embodies the inward feelings, the special, individual, and personal utterances, and every variety of passion, as the singer.

It is true that words and gestures are employed in expression, but the essential power of music is developed in the voice without the indefiniteness of wholly musical expression. And as music suggests still more than it communicates, so the voice of the entirely absorbed speaker, who improvises everything he utters except the primary thought

and the feeling, is employing music in the only true sense in which it may be called "the universal language," and sometimes in a WHITEFIELD or in a PATRICK HENRY it produced effects transcending any ever produced by mere words, inflections, and gestures. In the primitive ages poets, priests, and orators all sang.

A decadent accomplishment.

Some professors of elocution, themselves unable to sing, and perhaps a few who understand that art, have discouraged the orator from its pursuit. One at least has taught that speaking and singing involve different principles and, as exercises, are in a large degree antagonistic. Nevertheless, I recommend to a speaker the acquisition of a knowledge of the principles of vocal music and habitual practice of the art as a most valuable aid to the mastery of the voice, and to its most effective use in public speech.

That the voice has a different timbre in singing and in speaking depends only on the different forms of the sound waves, which in singing are much more favorable to the timbre than it is possible for them to be in speaking, and consequently a greater number of harmonic overtones are produced.*

In speaking the cavity of the mouth is smaller; in singing much more time is given to the formation of vocal tones. The sounds of speaking

* Madam Seiler, *The Voice in Singing.*

"quickly follow and crowd after one another." "Slurring of words is unavoidable in singing." Principally the differences are in the direction of the breath, the roominess of the cavity of the mouth, and in the length of time afforded for the development of the vocal tones.*

The ability to sing enables a speaker to determine at will the pitch of his voice, which without that is extremely difficult and usually impossible. The habit of singing materially aids in permanently changing the pitch. If a natural tenor will confine himself to baritone singing, the effect on his speaking voice will soon be perceived. If the basso, as an exercise, will sing music intended for the baritone, or even for the "robustuous tenor," he will not be so liable to sway downward in speaking.

Advantages of vocal music.

The practice of singing gives power to diminish or increase at will the strength of the voice. It is particularly favorable to the cultivation of the distinctions among vowel sounds, the depth and volume of which it increases. It has an excellent effect upon naturally unemotional speakers and upon those who from any cause have acquired a choppy style of articulation, and gives a pleasing rhythm to their style. It is beneficial to health, and thus adds greatly to the extemporizer's resources.

Dr. CAMPBELL, discussing the subject from a

* Madam Seiler, *The Voice in Speaking.*

medical point of view, shows the fine influence of singing upon health: "In singing there is a great disproportion between inspiration and expiration, the former being much the shorter. . . . From the medical standpoint singing is the most important exercise, both by virtue of its influence upon the emotions, on the respiratory movements, and on the development of the lungs. . . . Such therapeutic importance do I attach to singing that I recommend it whenever opportunity affords. It is especially useful in defective chest development and in chronic heart disease." He quotes from VON ZIEMSSEN'S *General Therapeutics:* "In consequence of the reports sent in from various quarters on the healthy influence of singing on the restoration of circulation and on the strengthening and nutrition of the lung, the practice of singing has been introduced even into prisons in order to antagonize pulmonary consumption, which generally develops in a short time among the convicts."

In recommending the study of music I refer particularly to the mastery of sight singing, which anyone who can sing at all can master if willing to persevere.

A caution.

The speaker who sings much must be careful lest he contract a chanting tone when speaking, and the orator who attempts to sing as an amateur for the entertainment of his friends or the public, unless in choruses, must be ever watchful lest he

contract an exclusively staccato method. One of the most famous both in speech and song escapes the influence of excessive singing upon speaking, but not that of speaking upon singing.

A distinction of supreme moment.

Force is not vivacity. One should never use more force than is necessary. If requested to speak louder, he should beware of raising the pitch of his voice; by a slight increase of volume on the same key he can make anyone whose organs of hearing are not defective hear distinctly. The groundwork of true oratory is the tone of lively conversation. Vivacity is not force, yet many, to evoke interest, use more force, when the only means of gaining what they seek is increasing animation. I have not elsewhere met with so clear a setting forth of this distinction as is found in a passage by Dr. Henry Mandeville:

"We should be careful not to confound force with vivacity. Force is strength, energy; vivacity is life, animation. Force has respect to the hearer, vivacity to the subject. . . . Force, to the verge of vociferation, especially if uniform, may be associated with dullness; vivacity never; and yet there may be great vivacity in speakers who have little force. . . . Force is under the control of the will, and is measured and regulated by the judgment; vivacity depends upon the feelings and their susceptibility of excitement from the progress of discussion. The one is therefore voluntary; the other

involuntary. A speaker can command force at any time; but vivacity, if it comes at all, comes without being summoned or solicited. It appears only when the speaker begins to be interested in his subject; and as this penetrates and warms and absorbs him it grows apace independently both of judgment and volition."*

Vivacity a matter of acquisition.

Although vivacity in speech cannot be commanded at will, the habit of conceiving vividly and moving and speaking quickly can be cultivated. On this possibility there is a suggestive passage in Boswell's Johnson. The incomparable biographer relates that he and his master visited Peter Garrick, the brother of David, Johnson's whilom pupil and lasting friend, in whose fame the great critic took unceasing pride. Peter had that morning received a letter from David, announcing their coming. The family likeness of the Garricks was very noticeable, and, says Boswell, "Johnson thought that David's vivacity was not so peculiar to himself as was supposed. 'Sir,' said he, 'I don't know but if Peter had cultivated all the arts of gayety as much as David had done, he might have been as brisk and lively. Depend upon it, sir, vivacity is much an art, and depends greatly on habit.'"

There is much truth in this; vivacity is usually a natural gift; but it can be lost and acquired. Voluntary indolence accounts for the dullness of

* *Elements of Reading and Oratory*, p. 62.

many in private, and whatever their susceptibility to stimulus from an audience, it will diminish rapidly after middle life if they indulge themselves in slothful mental and physical action.

Gist of the matter.

After mastering the principles of a reasonable elocution and remedying obvious defects, the extempore orator must be his preceptor and ultimate authority, ever guarding against the beguiling influence of self-love, which under such conditions predisposes the judgment of master and pupil to a favorable estimate.

CHAPTER XXVI

Gesture

Actors and other declaimers from memory are duly impressed with the importance of gesture, but extemporizers, as a class, give the subject scant attention, and appear to be under the delusion that any motion they may chance to make will be effective. Only those who are ignorant of even the rudiments of the philosophy of gesture can entertain such an opinion, and the majority who act upon it display automatic movements as repetitious as those of a windmill. They make no use of an influence often far greater than that of words.

"The judges of the Areopagus learned by experience the power of gesture, and to avoid coming under its spell [sometimes] adopted the plan of hearing pleas only in the darkness." *

Sagacity of the Areopagites.

They are also supposed on certain occasions to have compelled orators to wear masks. The power of gesture is illustrated in pantomime and in the modern system of sign language.

E. M. Gallaudet, LL.D., President of the Government College for the Deaf and Dumb, Kendall Green, Washington, D. C., informed me that in conversation among themselves educated deaf

* *Art of Oratory*, System of Delsarte.

mutes now seldom spell words—they use a system of signs for subjects, objects, qualities, states, and movements, whereby the equivalent of several words or a whole sentence may be represented by one or two gestures. He told me that in his travels in Europe he has met many deaf mutes of Italian, German, French, or other nationalities, and could address them at the same time, his signs being understood by all, who would write out his ideas in the language of the country to which each belonged.

A new soul experience.

No sensitive person can behold without intense emotion an accomplished deaf mute interpreting LONGFELLOW's "Psalm of Life." Familiar with that poem, I never comprehended its whole import until I heard it solemnly recited by Dr. PEET, of the New York Institution for the Deaf and Dumb, while at the same time the senior class rendered it in the sign language.

The eloquence of LOUIS KOSSUTH depended as much upon his strangely fascinating gestures as upon his tones and words. A remarkable instance of his power was displayed in Philadelphia, when by one gesture he exhibited the depressed condition of his people, and by another the exalted position attained through freedom by the people of this country. KOSSUTH was the first to impress me with the power of gesture to aid comprehension and enchain the mind.

Great as is the power of words, it is restricted to their meaning, melody, association, emphasis, and inflection.

More important part unreportable.

A renowned pulpit orator, soon after his ordination as bishop, visited Cincinnati to preach. The announcement of his coming awakened much interest, and the editor of one of the city papers determined to secure a verbatim report of his discourse. In the hope of pleasing both the orator and his readers, he employed the most expert stenographer, one usually engaged in reporting testimony, arguments, and charges to juries. Before the report was in type the editor informed the bishop that he possessed it, and the latter expressed a desire to see it. After reading for a time he exclaimed, "This is a miserable report, and I would not have it published on any account." The shorthand writer declared that he would make affidavit that every word uttered was reported, and that not one word had been added. This being communicated to the puzzled orator, with a thorough indorsement of the stenographer's competency, he pondered it for a long time, at last exclaiming, "The man has got my words, but he has utterly missed my thought; and, to be just to myself and your readers, I shall have to write the whole over again." A demonstration was thus afforded that in impassioned oratory—a marked characteristic of the bishop's public efforts when at his best—

words in their literal significance take a secondary place to gestures and inflection.

For a short time after birth a child "has no language but a cry." Its cries diminish as it begins to gesticulate voluntarily, and even before it can speak the germs of significant gestures can be traced.

I had not the opportunity in my youth of closely observing infants, but later I was domesticated with the family of a physician whose firstborn was but three months old; and during a year the development of the child was scientifically studied by his parents and myself. I noticed many things which might have escaped attention had I been familiar with young children, among others these: The child found much pleasure in being taken up and held by the mother, who indulged this desire until it became too great a tax; the infant when less than five months old made coaxing gestures, and, if denied, screamed at the top of his voice. When the attempt was made to replace him in the cot he resisted in an unmistakable way. The mother, urged by her husband, determined to escape from the thraldom, and refused to take up the child. After crying for a time he would become silent and fall asleep. But one day he cried himself into a violent fit of coughing. The mother could not resist this, and exclaiming, "What if the baby should die!" took him up.

Pantomime of infants.

That child reproduced the cough the next day, and was again humored, until it became apparent, even to the mother, that he had connected the cough with being taken up; and it became so plainly an intentional performance that she was compelled to ignore it, though it cost her a great effort to do so. When he found he could not gain his wish there was no more coughing.

Unable to pronounce a word, he had a series of gestures, some of much violence, indicating indignation; and if his playthings slipped beyond his reach, he would make gestures to the nurse, indicating his inability to get them and his desire to have them. I observed that as he began to talk he ceased to use some gestures, but continued to point toward the thing which he desired until he obtained it.

I have frequently spoken and written upon this subject, and my views are confirmed by MAX MÜLLER:

Max Müller on priority of gesture to words.

"Some philosophers try to get back even further. They observe that breathing of a certain sort is crying, and that children have no language but a cry. As the muscles of the child increase in strength he begins to gesticulate, and his cries diminish in proportion to the increase of his gestures. His cries become also more differentiated, and they again accompany certain of his acts and wishes with such regularity that a nurse can often

understand the different meanings of these cries. See an able article by Dr. J. M. BUCKLEY, 'The Philosophy of Gesture,' in *Werner's Voice Magazine*, November, 1890." *

Darwin's experiments.

When DARWIN's work on Expression appeared in 1872 I was prepared to receive his statement that

"It is difficult to prove that our children instinctively recognize any expression. I attended to this point in my firstborn infant, who could not have learned anything by associating with other children, and I was convinced that he understood a smile and received pleasure from seeing one, answering it by another, at much too early an age to have learned anything by experience. When this child was about four months old I made in his presence many odd noises and strange grimaces, and tried to look savage; but the noises, if not too loud, as well as the grimaces, were all taken as good jokes, and I attributed this at the time to their being preceded or accompanied by smiles. When five months old he seemed to understand the compassionate expression and tone of voice." †

Indian languages have comparatively few words, but all savage races abound in gestures. These are so similar to the modern deaf mute system that when a delegation of Indians visited the Government Deaf Mute Institution, at Kendall

* Max Müller, *Anthropological Religion*, pp. 66, 67.

† Darwin, *Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animal*, p. 359.

Green, Washington, D. C., they were able to converse with the deaf mutes.

It is very important to know the history of a race before attempting to deduce theories from the different fashions in which they express their emotions. The gestures of oriental peoples are more elaborate than those of the nations of Europe; but a marked similarity can be traced between those of the Spaniards and those of the more cultivated Moors. Decided differences are seen by all observing travelers among the various nations of Europe. Between the French and the Italians there are many similarities; the latter, however, make more use of gesture. The phlegmatic temperament of the Dutch has a repressing effect, and their few and usually placid gestures in turn perpetuate that temperament. The gestures of the Russians, and to a less extent of the Germans, indicate a rude force, and among the peasantry an undertone of pathos.

Gesticulation of population of Great Britain and Ireland.

In comparison with the orators of most other nations, the English are singularly destitute of significant and persuasive gesticulation. ADDISON, in 1712, described the forensic and pulpit eloquence of England, and I found his description, with a few noticeable exceptions, applicable to all the speaking I heard in Parliament during a period of six weeks' occasional attendance. Says ADDISON:

"Our preachers stand stock still in the pulpit,

and will not so much as move a finger to set off the best sermons in the world. We meet with the same speaking statues at our bars and in all public places of debate. . . . We can talk of life and death in cold blood, and keep our temper in a discourse which turns upon everything that is dear to us. Though our zeal breaks out in the finest tropes and figures, it is not able to stir a limb about us. . . . One who has not seen an Italian in the pulpit will not know what to make of that noble gesture in RAPHAEL'S picture of ST. PAUL preaching at Athens, where the apostle is represented as lifting up both his arms and pouring out the thunder of his rhetoric amidst an audience of pagan philosophers. . . . The truth of it is there is often nothing more ridiculous than the gestures of the English speaker; you see some of them running their hands into their pockets as far as ever they can thrust them, and others looking with great attention on a piece of paper that has nothing written on it; you may see many a smart rhetorician turning his hat in his hands, molding it into several different cocks, examining sometimes the lining of it and sometimes the button, during the whole course of his harangue. A deaf man would think he was cheapening a beaver, when, perhaps, he is talking of the fate of the British nation." *

Raphael as a teacher of oratory.

* *Spectator*, No. 407.

The difference between typical Scotch and English gesticulation is the clearest indication of their subtle intellectual and temperamental dissimilarity. The gestures of the Irish apart from the element of pugnacity resemble those of the French.

The Welsh, perhaps the most susceptible and fervid in eloquence of all Europeans, while less vivacious than the French or the Italians, have gestures so characteristic that, unless he has become fluent in English, or has trained himself under a system of elocution, the Welsh orator can be identified as far as he can be seen. The Welsh variety of oratory, when the speaker is under the influence of fervent emotion, is well described by the word "melting."

The United States until within forty years presented striking differences. The New England type of public speaking was at one extreme and the Southern at another, while the middle Atlantic States partook of the qualities of both. The types were produced not by one difference, but by many; those of gesture were fully as pronounced as those of inflection, language, articulation, and rhythm.

Modifications in the United States.

In the Western States, settled by foreigners from all parts of Europe and by those who migrated from the older States, a manner of oratory grew up, modified by the vastness and roughness of the

country, the freedom of intercourse, and the habit of speaking in forests or on the banks of great streams—a vehement style, in which gesticulation makes more use of the thrust, the blow, the clenched fist, than of the argumentative point or the languid curve. But as schools, colleges, and all the institutions of the older civilization press forward those States come under the spell which has modified the others. The pioneer stump speaker disappears, and a common American type will soon obliterate the traces of those differences which invested with such interest an orator from one of the great sections when he appeared in another. Amid all these varieties can be traced certain conditions affecting particular individuals.

Paolo Mantegazza, Director of the Anthropological Museum at Florence, deplores the fact that racial and national differences frequently arouse vulgar impertinences instead of inciting to an analytical and profound study of the psychical constitution of the different human families.

An Italian anthropologist upon racial and national differences.

"The Italians of animated expression say of the English, 'They feel nothing!' And the English say of the Italians, 'They are buffoons.' Neither of these two impertinences has any foundation. The Italian nerve cell discharges at once the centrifugal energy which accumulates there; unfortunate for it if, by the thousand telegraphic threads of expression, it should not find as many safety

valves! The English cell is deeply charged, and slowly imprisons the accumulated force." *

One cannot visit Turin, Milan, Venice, Florence, and Naples without noting great differences among Italians in their conventional signs of feeling, as well as in their spontaneous expressions. These are to be accounted for by the character and historical experiences of the conglomerate population of that country.

MANTEGAZZA gives a striking instance of the liability to erroneous conclusions:

Persistence of ancestral temperament.

"The Scandinavians are taciturn, sober in their movements; they have little vivacity; their ways of expression are full of reserve, I would say concentric."

In traveling leisurely through Denmark, Sweden, and Norway I revised the opinion formed by reading upon this subject. The reserve which affects the Scandinavians, particularly the Norwegians, is removed by acquaintance; they then seem to have much vivacity and are the very reverse of taciturn. In Drontheim and other parts of Norway I attended religious services and found the people intensely and expressively emotional, and socially as effusive as the middle classes in England and the people generally in the United States. Of course the Scandinavians are by no means as vivacious as the countrymen of the learned writer from whom I quote.

* *Physiognomy and Expression*, p. 85.

MANTEGAZZA proceeds: "But go to Bergen, one of the largest towns in Norway. You will see, on the contrary, gay, noisy people, with eccentric and exuberant manners of expression. What does this mean? It is still cold at Bergen! Why, then, should expression there be quite different from that of Drontheim and Christiania? It is because at Bergen a number of centuries ago a large quantity of Irish slaves were imported.

"It is with the Celtic people that the telegraph of gestures, the vivacity of expression, was introduced. You have compared amongst them people dwelling in Norway, but springing from different races." *

* *Physiognomy and Expression*, p. 231.

CHAPTER XXVII

Origin and Psychology of Gesture

Significant motions of brutes.

The Darwinian theory of the origin of species and that of special creation do not collide fundamentally when applied to the origin of gesture. For the sub-animals, unprovided with words, and in many species incapable of inflecting their voices, unquestionably make gestures whereby they understand each other. Those animals which have associated with man generally have a greater variety of expressive motions than those which have remained undomesticated.

Genesis of human gestures.

If the idea of an individual man, created by direct exercise of the power of God and without experience, be made the subject of analysis, it will appear that most of his gestures have been acquired by experiment, which fact, under the law of heredity, would speedily give rise to a generation having a predisposition to perform certain acts. Were a human being left alone from birth, its physical wants provided for, gestures would spring from mental excitement, or from an efflux of unused energy, and either might contribute to the production of a habit. It is probable that such a being would add various signs of ideas to aid his own thinking processes.

When an animal is attracted to something external to itself it immediately directs its eye and ear toward the object. The cat, endeavoring to capture a bird or watching at a hole for a mouse, presents a remarkable illustration of concentrated attention. In man, also, attention begins in the direction of the eye and ear, and every part of the human system which can be affected by ideas and sensations is involved, while sympathetic influences pervade the vital organism.

Psychological bearings.

Spontaneous gestures originate in impulses which reach every part of the body. It is this which explains the almost irresistible tendency in those who are trying to master the bicycle to run into trees or other objects which they wish to avoid. There is an unconscious impulse toward everything at which we look. It is this, too, which makes possible that form of mind reading which should properly be characterized as muscle reading.

Here I find the root of spontaneous gestures connected with thought and feeling, and also the explanation of the sudden increase of gestures in a man when he becomes greatly enraged who has schooled himself to make but few, and has concentrated his whole mental power upon the selection, pronunciation, and proper inflection of words. It accounts for the extraordinary increase of gestures when orators have passed from explanation

and argument to denunciation or pathetic delineation.

Reflex influence of realistic style.

Every figure of speech used to express abstract ideas produces an impulse, weaker than, but of the same nature as, that which would be caused by a physical evil or good. For example, if one were to perceive an assassin, with drawn dagger stealthily creeping toward him, instinctively he would retreat; and if the murderer rapidly approached, would thrust out the hands to protect himself; and if, in speaking of subtle tempters, he should, under the influence of strong passion, call them assassins of the soul, there would be an impulse to the same gestures. Even in writing an oration which one expects to deliver memoriter or extemporaneously, as the thought arises in his mind it will generate an emotion which, if not obstructed by the constrained position, would develop a gesture.

It is this which accounts for the effect upon the brain and nervous system of composing in a realistic style. Not until the fires of nature burn low, only the reasoning and perceptive faculties remaining active, is it possible for one to sit composing or thinking without the sympathy of the entire system; much less can he speak without it. Hence there need be no fear that suitable gestures will not be suggested, provided habits of expression have been properly acquired.

Sex, age, and temperament.

Sex influences gesticulation. Women are more fluent in speech than men, and naturally need fewer gestures; but as the impulse to speak impels to gesticulation, they make quite as many, yet from various physiological causes, as well as from the fact that until recently they were—and the majority still are—unaccustomed to public discussion, their gestures are shorter in range. The sports of children, being determined in a large degree by sex, lay the foundation of a different class of gestures. The clenched fist is the type of manly vigor, but not of womanly energy. Individual temperament, however, may be independent of sex; hence the brawling woman and the effeminate man. The aged make few gestures.

The virago cosmopolitan.

The gesticulation of French women is more animated than that of the males of most other countries, particularly in the lower classes, such as *Les Dames aux Halles*, "half unsexed by the masculine nature of their employments and entirely so by the ferocity of their manners," who participated in the horrors of the first French Revolution, and were more violent even than the men of their own country.*

He who visits the Billingsgate Fish Market, in London, and observes the disturbances continually occurring among the viragoes who have made the name of the market a synonym for violence of

* Scott's *Life of Napoleon*, vol. i, p. 79.

language and action, will perceive little difference between men and women as respects furious gesticulation. A walk through Donnybrook Fair as it was, or the markets of Cork, would convince the most skeptical that the gentle sex may, under excitement, go to greater lengths than the ungentle in vehemence of gesture and vulgarity of language. There is no reason to suppose that there was any difference between the gesticulation of the women and that of the men of Sparta, or that there is any dissimilarity in manners between the Amazonian warriors of Africa and combatants of the opposite sex.

Imitated gestures can be traced through families, neighborhoods, and sects. The supposed likeness of children to their parents often consists chiefly in similarity of attitude and gesture unconsciously imitated.

Critically observant.

It is an advantage to a speaker to observe narrowly the gestures of extemporaneous orators whom he may chance to hear. He soon perceives that the gestures of some express feelings in a striking way, while others contradict the sentiment they are uttering; some looking downward when speaking of heaven, and toward the sky when describing abysses, literal or figurative; some smiling when they should weep, or tearful without occasion, others using fierce gestures where all should be mild.

Habitually a close observer, the extemporizer should practice, in private, gestures which he approves; but should by no means resolve to make them in public. The attempt to do so is fatal to extemporization. Let him incorporate them with his capital stock; he may then be assured that as with words so with gestures—those that he practices in private will control to a large degree those which he spontaneously employs in public.

The intentional imitation of other men's gestures and postures excites contempt, and is a foe to original eloquence.

Beware of imitation.

Daniel Webster was five feet and eleven inches in height, with an immense chest and hollow back. Many young lawyers, without regard to their physical proportions, much less to their mental inequalities, attempted to imitate him until shamed off the stage by the caricaturists of the time. The late Bishop Wiley was at one time president of a seminary. He made one peculiar gesture, and on a commencement occasion the assembly almost became uproarious as at least five of the students imitated that characteristic act, the natural result of their president's physical proportions.

In the most intense agitations of the antislavery conventions in Boston, where the earnestness of speakers and people was almost appalling, I saw several young men imitate Wendell Phillips so closely that the audience smiled, and Mr.

PHILLIPS in his closing speech facetiously alluded to the compliment they had paid him. The most gifted of these imitators was a Negro, who, however, soon burst forth with strains and gestures so unlike the self-possessed but burning eloquence of PHILLIPS that the people forgot the parrot tones and monkey movements of his introduction.

Influence of free and established religions.

A striking instance of the reciprocal influence of thought and gesture is furnished by the different styles of gesticulation in the dissenting denominations, as compared with the representatives of religions established by the state. Dissenters, in the beginning, progress by argumentative attack and defense. They are obliged to prove their right to be; hence they make much use of the index finger, the downward stroke of the arm and blow of the fist.

The contrast between the representatives of different religions appears even in a republic, and was strongly marked between the descendants of the Church of England and the settlers of New England, accentuated by the reflex influence of the gown upon the representatives of the Churches which make a distinction in pulpit garb. The gown is an embarrassment to an argumentative speaker, provided he gesticulates, but is of assistance to those who assume principles upon authority and treat them rhetorically. Gestures in which

the curve predominates are magnified and made impressive by the gown; those of an angular nature impeded by it.

I discovered this by experience. Invited to preach on a special subject, requiring discriminations and argumentation, I was asked on arriving if I would wear the gown. I replied, "I invariably conform to the custom of the church in which I speak." Immediately after beginning I found the gown becoming entangled and my motions obstructed, so that I was compelled to adopt the curved gestures; but the reactionary effect upon the speech was such that most of my formal proofs evaporated, and I declaimed rather than argued, and asserted rather than distinguished.

Images and pictures aids to dramatic oratory.

The character of gesticulation is noticeably affected by the orator's visual perception of the images and pictures which are found in the Roman Catholic and Greek Churches. In San Antonio, Tex., I heard a Spanish priest preach four Lenten sermons and have never seen more graceful or expressive gestures. He turned to the images of Christ and to the pictures of saints and angels as he apostrophized them, and could not have been more eloquent had they been visibly present. I have seen in the Russo-Greek Churches similar apostrophizings which greatly moved the spectators.

Religious ceremonial.

The ceremonies of various denominations are largely systems of gesture—a species of etiquette

observed by worshipers in the presence of each other and of God. The Roman, the Greek, and the Armenian Churches illustrate it in the highest developed form. Visitors to Jerusalem may see in the Abyssinian Church a strange blending of the barbaric element with early Greek forms.

A Christian is rarely admitted during the services of the Mohammedan mosques; but a single opportunity enabled me to perceive the operation upon gesture and attitude of the influence of the rules of direction derived from the birthplace and tomb of the prophet and of various events in his career. These appear in grotesque forms in the howling, and in graceful, in the spinning, dervishes. Friends, Methodists, and Baptists exhibit religion with the least ceremonial.

Spontaneity of action in conversation.

The study of the operation of spontaneous gesture must begin with conversation, for, with certain exceptions to be noted, one is natural when thus engaged. I refer to casual conversations at the dinner table, the accidental meeting of acquaintances or strangers, and to informal business interviews. Primarily the gestures of conversation are those of the eye, the face, and the pose ; and in close conversation others will be few and short unless a protracted monologue is entered upon. In the more delicate relations of life, however, little can be accomplished by mere words; in gestures chiefly resides persuasive power.

The spirit of government embodied in gesture.

Etiquette is mainly a system of gesture, originating in the general spirit of the people. Its fundamental principles are "attraction, humility, and reserve." Hence the etiquette of free governments differs from that of despotisms. GEORGE WASHINGTON struggled with the forms of both. When the republic was born he desired to perpetuate many of the ceremonies of the English court, and was severely criticised by the radical party for his aristocratic sentiment and bearing. The President of the United States must now be on his guard or the average citizen will slap him on the back and say, "How are you, Mr. President?" And Justices of the Federal Supreme Court may be accosted by comparative strangers with, "Good morning, Judge; how are you, old boy?" Both these impertinences have been perpetrated by persons who did not feel guilty of an impropriety until their attention was directed to it.

The evil effect of the prevailing tendency has been seen in diminished respect for law; but fortunately there are indications of a reaction against the general disregard of the honor due to office and age.

CHAPTER XXVIII

Mechanism of Gesture

Declaimers and actors.

THE orator who recites may prepare gestures. DANIEL WEBSTER in his formal orations illustrated this. EDWARD EVERETT made elaborate preparation, and after hearing his famous lecture on WASHINGTON a few times one could foresee each motion. But it would have been impossible for PATRICK HENRY to prepare a gesture. An actor's gestures being prearranged, their pertinency should be estimated from his point of view; hence there may be different HAMLETS of equal merit.

Development of gesture in extempore efforts.

The relation of gesticulation to extemporaneous oratory is best discerned by observing a speaker who addresses an audience assembled solely to hear him. He comes forward and begins in the sphere of the intellect. Words being sufficient to convey his meaning, gestures are unnecessary. But though he moves wholly in the realm of reason, gestures of energy and rhythm subsequently appear. He waxes warm, and the changes that take place are such as are seen in men who begin to walk after long sitting. At first the limbs move stiffly, but after a short time rhythmical motion spontaneously appears. The soldier long ago

mustered out, after he has marched a mile on a gala day, will "keep rank" like a cadet ready for graduation.

As the orator proceeds, the cerebral cells, vocal chords, respiratory muscles, arms, and legs act in unison, and if he has any genuine feeling, he will make significant gestures; the pent-up fires must find outlet. Gesture is a natural protection from collapse.

Posture. To perfect one's self herein is not a light task. Comparatively few even know how to stand in an easy yet firm attitude. Standing motionless is exhausting, yet it can be made endurable without the slightest change in the position of the feet, by transferring the weight at intervals from one leg to the other. Some do this so regularly as to excite remark and diminish their dignity.

Usually there is a feeling of diffidence when a speaker rises, and under its influence he may assume an attitude which will demean him. To prevent this he should form a habit of standing properly, however unimportant the occasion, and in formal interviews should maintain a position becoming his office. There are those who stand correctly, but find it difficult to change their position gracefully; hence the advantage of private practice.

Mutinous members. Irregular or inappropriate use of the hands is sure to excite criticism. But few know how to

manage their legs; these supporting pillars are often allowed to assume ungainly postures, or to move so grotesquely as to excite ridicule.

The chief instrument of expression.

The face, however, is more important than any other part of the body. Without a single gesture or motion some have been able to maintain interest through long discourses; others whose gestures, as a result of slavery to habits, were uncouth and some great orators unfortunately lame or maimed, have by the magic of their speaking countenances caused their defects or infirmities to be forgotten. Hence says DELSARTE: "The expression of the face should make the gestures of the arms forgotten. Here the talent of the orator shines forth. He must so fascinate his auditors that they cannot ask the reason of their fascination, nor remark that he gesticulates at all." *

Abnormalities of countenance.

Defects of facial expression are very common. There are habitual muscular contractions and nervous twitchings originating in embarrassment in early life, and some men have a habit of speaking only from one side of the month. Many from the beginning to the end wear an inane smile, or in passages supposed to be impassioned disfigure their countenances by meaningless contortions. The eyes of some are fixed

* All quotations relating to Delsarte are from *Art of Oratory*, System of Delsarte, translated from the French of M. L'Abbe Delaumosne by Francis M. Shaw.

in a stony stare, and those of others incessantly move.

He who employs numerous words and manifold gestures to express the same idea or feeling seriously errs. Gesture weakens if it does not add to the force of words. Words diminish the force of a speaker if they do not augment or explain the significance of the gestures.

DELSARTE says: "A written discourse must contain various epithets and adjectives to illustrate the subject. In a spoken discourse a great number of adjectives are worse than useless. Gesture and inflection of the voice supply their place. The intelligent man makes few gestures. To multiply gestures indicates a lack of intelligence. The face is the thermometer of intelligence. Let as much expression as possible be given to the face. A gesture made by the hand is wrong when not justified in advance by the face. Intelligence is manifested by the face."

An error often unrecognized.

Excess of gesture was termed by the classic writers "the babbling of the hands." It is a grievous defect, and usually consists of the meaningless repetition of a few simple movements, some of which are liable to be uncouth, there being no reason in the nature of things for their appearance.

The gestures of WHITEFIELD were indeed incessant, but they were always graceful.

"They gave significance to every sentence, and

brought before his audience each scene that he described as vividly as though it were present to their eyes. . . . He was contemporary with GARRICK, and so perfect was his gesticulation that the people, instead of paying him the compliment of calling him the GARRICK of the pulpit, paid him the far higher compliment of calling GARRICK the WHITEFIELD of the stage." *

Without his natural gifts and his extraordinary cultivation of them, had his gestures been as numerous as they were, and as insignificant as are the majority of those made by ordinary speakers, they would have rendered him unpopular.

* *Orators and Oratory*, Matthews, pp. 385, 386.

CHAPTER XXIX

Improper Gestures and Their Remedy

EVERY speaker should be willing to receive intelligent criticism even if it come from an enemy. An ordinary speaker was transformed into a genuine orator from being told that he placed his hand over his liver whenever he referred to his heart, for it prompted him to give years to the study of the philosophy of gesture.

Origin of most infelicities.

The majority of improper gestures result from a want of rhythm in the movement. Instead of every responsive muscle and nerve acting in harmony with the fundamental impulse from the brain, some are involuntarily or intentionally restrained or forced forward. I knew an orator who apparently could not speak with satisfaction to himself until he had hitched up one leg of his trousers to the top of his old-fashioned boot. CHARLES G. FINNEY, the masterful evangelist, was ill at ease unless his thumb was hooked in his suspender; and on one occasion, when speaking to a thousand people, the button came off, and he became so agitated that he had to retire and fasten the suspender before he could resume.

A minister preaching upon the text, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will

give you rest," and making a most earnest appeal, gesticulated with the clenched fist with such vehemence that, though his tones were soft, a surgeon present said to him afterward, "Had I judged your intentions by your gestures, I should have been afraid to come forward." Whenever one perceives in another such a contradiction of sense and sound he should inquire what unfitting gestures he may himself unconsciously make. Scrutiny of self.

Forcelessness in gesture is a characteristic of many speakers. Angularity of motion another defect;—such as a striking, pointing, or thrusting from the shoulder, varied by attitudes suggesting a fencer on guard.

Neither walking, cycling, horseback riding, nor heavy gymnastics will give a speaker the condition of nerve and muscle essential to easy, forcible, and graceful gesticulation. Cycling, though healthful in moderation, tends to stiffen the muscles of the arm. Walking, when the arms are swung, is beneficial, but, except in a hilly country, is a constant repetition of the same motions. Light gymnastics, such as the Swedish Movement Cure and many so-called DELSARTE exercises, are valuable. Inadequate exercises.

Nevertheless, the student or sedentary person, in order to keep his arms and hands in suitable condition to gesticulate, should take daily exercises, with or without apparatus, which will bring into Practices of special utility.

a condition to respond with vigor and rapidity to the slightest impulse every muscle of the arm, every sinew of the hand, the ligaments and muscles connecting the shoulders with the trunk, those of the neck and head, and those which admit of the body's turning quickly from side to side. Dumb-bells and Indian clubs are suited to this purpose, but it is not necessary to have apparatus; for if the fists be clenched, one may strike out without damage to the organism. Twenty minutes a day of this work will keep one so in condition that whenever he gesticulates all will feel that a battery of force is before them.

Mental and optical reflection.

Connected with such exercises, or as a substitute for them on alternate days, is a form of practice essential to everyone who would speak well. He should master, either from illustrated books or under the instruction of competent teachers, the gestures which express the principal emotions and generic ideas; and should practice these merely as exercise, without regard to the ideas or emotions which they are intended to express, and should *do so before a mirror.*

It is common to sneer at practicing before a mirror, and to intimate that it is inconceivable for a true minister of the Gospel to be so vain. Against this ignorance I quote the instructions given to his young ministers by the learned, eloquent, and devout JOHN WESLEY:

"It is more difficult to find out the faults of your own gesture than those of your pronunciation. For a man may hear his own voice, but cannot see his own face; neither can he observe the several motions of his own body; at least but imperfectly. To remedy this you may use a large looking-glass, as DEMOSTHENES did, and thereby observe and learn to avoid every disagreeable or unhandsome gesture. . . . But it is the face which gives the greatest life to action; of this, therefore, you must take the greatest care, that nothing may appear disagreeable in it, since it is continually in the view of all but yourself. And there is nothing can prevent this but the looking-glass, or a friend who will deal faithfully with you."

Such practice never to be omitted.

Exercise is especially important to speakers advancing in years. After a sedentary man is forty, and often before, his muscles begin to stiffen, his range of gesticulation to shorten, and he stoops, leans, and frequently, except in the latter part of a discourse when he is aroused, his motions are feeble, repetitious, and insignificant. But he who daily practices may, till the close of a long life, preserve grace and energy; as the aged blacksmith, while perhaps weak in his lower limbs, still swings the hammer with sufficient vigor to earn his daily bread; or as the letter carrier, whose hands

* *Works of the Rev. John Wesley, A.M.*, third American edition, vol. vii, p. 492.

tremble, can still walk swiftly. But the cessation of practice for a single month might render it difficult for either of them to resume satisfactorily.

Such exercises alone as have been mentioned would in a single year transform many now barely tolerable speakers into effective orators. Says DELSARTE: "If the gestures are good, the most wretched speaking is tolerated. So much the better if the speaking is good, but gesture is the all-important thing."

Between TAVERNER and DELSARTE there exists a seeming difference on a vital point. "Gestures," says the former, "must fall on the word that calls them up. The hand, being quicker than the mind, must be held back to keep time with conventional language, in which the primary word is often near the end of the sentence."

Seeming contradiction between high authorities.

DELSARTE says: "Gesture must always precede speech. In fact, speech is reflected expression. It must come after gesture, which is parallel with the impression received. Nature incites a movement; speech names this movement. Speech is only the title, the label of what gesture has anticipated. Speech comes only to confirm what the audience already comprehend. . . . Priority of gesture may be thus explained: First, a movement responds to the sensation; then a gesture, which depicts the emotion, responds to the imagination, which colors the sensation. Then comes the

judgment, which approves. Finally we consider the audience, and this view of the audience suggests the appropriate expression for that which has already been expressed by gesture. . . . Eloquence is composed of many things which are not named, but must be named by slight gestures. In this eloquence consists. Thus a smack of the tongue, a blow upon the hand, an utterance of the vowel *u* as if one would remove a stain from his coat. The writer cannot do all this. The mere rendition of the written discourse is nothing for the orator; his talent consists in taking advantage of a great number of little nameless sounds" and gestures.

Attempt to harmonize them.

The apparently radical difference between these authorities becomes less manifest when we consider that TAVERNER referred more particularly to gestures of significance in the plane of the intellect, while DELSARTE gives all gesture primarily the office of persuasion, maintaining that the mind can be interested by speech, but must be persuaded by gesture. "An audience," he maintains, "is never intelligent; it is a multiple being possessed of sense and sentiment. The greater the numbers, the less intelligence has it. . . . An audience is persuaded not by reasoning, but by gesture. . . . It is not ideas that move the masses; it is gestures. . . . The mind and the life are active only for the satisfaction of the heart; then,

since the heart controls all our actions, gesture must control all other languages."

When Professor TAVERNER treated gesture in relation to persuasion he taught, although less dogmatically, the substance of what DELSARTE maintained of all gesture.

All that I have thus far recommended in the way of exercise is preliminary to one form which to some extent includes all others.

Psychological practice.

Let the speaker imagine himself in a foreign land where he does not know the alphabet and is unable to understand a single word or to read the street signs; also that he is angry and that it is necessary to exhibit his feelings to the natives. He must then try to conceive by what looks and gestures he would cause the people to perceive his indignation; and having formed the ideal, he should throw himself into those attitudes, take on the expressions of countenance, and execute the gestures. He must not present a caricature, but so make known his anger that they will sympathize with him. Then let him imagine himself afraid; and so proceed through the circle of human sympathies and antipathies.

While attempting this he should not perplex himself by striving to remember gestures learned from books or from the elocutionist, but should concentrate his whole fancy and feeling upon the supposed situation. It would be better to overdo

than to underdo. The one essential is that he shall throw into every feature and motion the feeling which he is supposed to possess. He will improve his imagination by this process, and as he progresses should complicate the situation and exercises until he is prepared in pantomime to represent them all. This naturally is a strictly private exercise. Criticism from spectators while he is practicing cannot aid him who proposes to extemporize; though it might be of considerable importance to one who intended to be an actor either on the stage or in the pulpit.

Its philosophy.

The philosophy of this practice is that when one surrenders himself to the delivery of an oration, and the sentiment agitating his brain seeks avenues of expression through every part of the responsive organism, the gestures which he has so frequently employed to express such conceptions will be those which he will unconsciously make. Only by such practice can he eradicate evil habits and prevent the formation of others no less defective.

Striking illustration.

I have asserted that actors prearrange their gestures. There is a comedy entitled *Come Here*, which illustrates this method of private practice. It assumes that a manager has advertised for "a leading lady" and has become disgusted with the conceit of incompetent applicants. He determines to pay no attention to lofty recommendations or

to self-praise, but to test all. At this moment a lady is announced. She expresses a willingness to submit to such a trial, and he says, "I require only two words, 'Come here,' and with the words, the meaning, emphasis, and expressions that situation, character, and surroundings would command."

He tells her to imagine herself a queen who deigns to call one of her maids of honor; to command a courtier not in favor; to summon to the foot of the throne a hero that his glorious deeds may be rewarded. He directs her to fancy herself a mother who calls her little daughter whom she tenderly loves, then a stepdaughter with whom she is vexed, and so through a dozen typical situations.

An unequal view.

Madam SEILER, in her useful work on *The Voice in Speaking*, states that she had often witnessed this comedy, but not until she saw JANAUSCHEK act this part was she made to share in the various emotions expressed, and she says: "Simply by varying the vocal tones, the shadings, intonations, the *tempi* of these tones, the artist was able so to utter these two syllables as to produce in the hearer one state of feeling after another of the most different and opposite character, with a success not to be attained by the most elaborate and vivid description. And this effect was secured simply by the Modulation of the Voice."

In aggrandizing her profession Madam SEILER

has ignored what, in the opinion of all whom I have met who have heard JANAUSCHEK in this rôle, is the principal element in the representation, namely, the gestures by which the different scenes are pantomimically represented; gestures which include every possible expression of the face, turn of the head, poise of the trunk, and movements of the limbs, with varying degrees of grace and energy. It is demonstrable that gestures alone, with so limited a vocabulary as the test allowed, would be far more illuminating and effective than the two words without gesture, whatever the modulation of the voice.

Inflexible rules valueless.

Different systems of gesticulation are valuable only as their root principles are comprehended and assimilated. I reached this conclusion early in my study of the subject, and it was gratifying to find long afterward so admirable a statement of the principles in DELAUMOSNE'S system of DELSARTE:

"When the law is known each applies it in accordance with his own idea. . . . The student of oratory should not be a servile copyist. In the arrangement of his effects he must copy, imitate, and compose. Let him first reproduce a fixed model, the lesson of the master. This is to copy. Let him then reproduce the lesson in the absence of the master. This is to imitate. Finally let him reproduce a fugitive model. This is to compose."

CHAPTER XXX

Public Oral Debate

It is the opinion of many that public debate is nearly always useless; that it leaves those who participate stronger in prejudice or prepossession than before, and divides audiences into bitter partisans of the speakers. I hold the exact opposite of this view, believing the general effect of public debate to be excellent, and that there is no stimulant to thought and thorough examination comparable with it.

Utility of discussion.

A distinguished professional debater of England says: "Men may read on both sides, but it seldom happens that men who are impressed by one side care to read the other. In discussions they are obliged to hear both sides. If men do read both sides, unless they read a discussion, they do not find all the facts stated on one side especially considered by the other."*

I have seen the protracted work of large committees overthrown by a single luminous address, and a compact party, which for years had been preparing for a crisis, scattered to the winds by one speech delivered by a venerable man, supposed, when he began, to be in a helpless minority.

*G. J. Holyoake.

I have observed similar changes in the Senate of the United States, in the House of Commons, and in the ruling bodies of the great religious communions.

These are not always the most remarkable effects of debate. Particular speakers, in certain discussions, have been hissed from the platform, and personal violence has been done them, but, though obstinacy and vanity forbade immediate confession, those who had derided and assaulted have subsequently adopted the views which had roused their antagonism.

An immortal offspring of discussion.

An old English proverb says, "Disputations leave truth in the middle and party at both ends." Without doubt this is often true, but, disputations over, moderate men and some from "both ends," turning longingly toward the truth in the middle, and conciliating each other, frame a rational platform which becomes the basis of enduring prosperity or efficiency. The Constitution of the United States, the greatest achievement of the human intellect, was thus adopted by the convention and confirmed by the thirteen independent commonwealths. The debates of patriotic men with divergent and ever-clashing interests overcame prejudice, united discordant sections, and made that actual which many statesmen believed impossible.

Debates in the legal profession take place under

Courts of justice.

specified conditions. The judge, an authoritative expositor of the law, presides. The jurymen are the sole judges of facts, having also power to apply the law under judicial instruction. There are two or more lawyers seeking to control the verdict; the statements of each are sure to be traversed by the other and to be reviewed by the court. Success depends upon a thorough knowledge of the questions allowed, of the law, of the highest confirmatory decisions, of the testimony of witnesses, facility in interlocution, and preparation for the final arguments. It must be remembered that it is possible to fail by overproving and by too minute attention to details.

Philosophical rules which vex the unlearned.

An understanding of the rules of procedure is essential. Not only the opposing counsel, but the judge, will object at the slightest departure from them. These rules, though not understood by the general public, and by many believed to be prejudicial to the interests of truth, are based upon philosophical principles whose mastery demands the exercise of the highest faculties of the mind. They rest upon these restrictions: The lawyer is not allowed to address the jury upon matters which have not been admitted in evidence; nothing can be admitted which is irrelevant or not within the knowledge of the witnesses; leading questions, those which can be answered by yes or no, or those in which the question shall

suggest the answer, are forbidden; because if such be permitted, the mind of the counsel may be the source of the knowledge rather than that of the witness; in which case, either the truth will not be told, or only a part of it, or something contrary to it will be added. The purpose of the cross-examination being to test the credibility, the recollection, the motives of the witness, and the pertinency of what he presents, there are few restrictions, except those implied in the requirement of relevancy. Except in specified instances, hearsay evidence is excluded, because it cannot be traversed.

In these rules are involved the same principles which apply universally to debate; and a sound intellect, accustomed to reason, will have no difficulty in understanding their application, unless in intricate cases or arguments of extreme subtlety.

Parliamentary law.

The debates of town meetings resemble those of old-fashioned debating societies, and are governed by ordinary parliamentary law. The discussions of ecclesiastical and all authoritative conventions have so much in common with those of legislatures and the Congress of the United States that it is not necessary to refer to them, except incidentally. As debaters in such bodies contend under the rules of parliamentary law, only by its mastery can a participant economize his time, escape interruption, and secure attentive hearing.

The object of a deliberative assembly is to impart information and to unify sentiment, preparatory to expressing its judgment or will in resolutions or enactments.

The primary object of rules is the preservation of order; but mere order might coexist with silence and inaction. Hence many rules relate to the bringing of business before the house; others to the keeping of it there sufficiently long to admit of its being understood and determined; still others to the removal of it from the house when its further retention is unnecessary, wearisome, or an impediment to the consideration of pressing matters. Other regulations protect the rights and privileges of members.

Circumscribed knowledge ineffectual.

Parliamentary law is a general term, but as a Minnesota lawyer, if admitted to the bar in New York, would be handicapped without an understanding of the special rules of practice of the latter commonwealth, so the particular usages of different countries, States, Churches, and other organizations must be learned by every newcomer before he can be quite at ease. Also the exigencies of each body require the passage of special rules, and these may be changed from year to year, or session to session, or even during the same session, by action of the house, without reference to a committee or upon report of a committee upon rules.

To be able, therefore, to make a powerful and convincing speech is but one of the qualifications for success in debate. To know when to speak, how to obtain the floor, and to unfold thought so as to retain the floor; to divert attention from an amendment that would insidiously undermine the pending proposition; to speak a second time by proposing an amendment in harmony with the rules; to check an opponent who, under cover of an amendment, endeavors to speak a second time on the main question, are as necessary to success in a debate limited by time as similar ability and knowledge are to a lawyer in the trial of civil and criminal cases.

Divers essentials to success.

Previous to special preparation for debate there must be a general preparation of the debater, who should be an habitual inquirer into all subjects upon which it is possible to hold more than one opinion.

The preparation of the debater.

He must be a thinker. What he sees he must understand. What he reads he must comprehend. What he sees and reads must become part of the capital stock of raw material ready to be recollected on the instant. Otherwise his mind will resemble the libraries of some literary men, filled with drawers crowded with documents on certain subjects, which they know they possess, but cannot find when desired for use.

The debater cannot tell what question may arise or how sudden may be the demand upon

Protection against the unforeseen.

him; neither can he foreknow what his opponent will say. His mind, therefore, must be a storehouse, full but not overcrowded, since observation, reading, and thinking may be carried to such an extent as to destroy spontaneity, and thus have a similar effect upon the mind to that which gluttony produces upon the body. A proposition may be before an assembly, members being equally entitled to the floor and obliged to scramble for it; a new proposition may start in an instant, for it is a rule of parliamentary law that an amendment, provided it be germane, may be offered to any motion or resolution. Hence the question can be modified almost to the degree of extinguishing the original subject; the proposal advocated may be reversed or a substitute be proposed. What would it avail for a man to be prepared to speak on one question if he cannot possibly adjust himself to a new situation? "What boots it at one gate to make defense and at another to let in the foe?" Hence the professional debater should acquire the faculty of estimating the argumentative weight of facts as he stores them away in his mind, and the power withal of sub-consciously giving them titles, so that they will be available as weapons in the heat of conflict. If he hesitates, the derisive cheers of his opponents may accomplish more for their cause than their arguments could have done.

Debate is a valuable aid to the acquisition of the power of speaking extemporaneously. The superficial, who may have attained some reputation as orators, based upon one or two memorized addresses frequently repeated, but who have no fountain of thought or speech, are incompetent to render a reason for any opinion, and who hold nothing with tenacity, sometimes affect surprise that so "few great orators are effective debaters." Whereas, with the exception of a few distinguished preachers and lecturers possessing a descriptive or a hortatory gift, it would be difficult to name many great extemporaneous orators who were not strong debaters.

An unsurpassed aid to all forms of free speaking.

A more important consideration relative to the acquisition of the power of extemporaneous speech is that numerous orators are indebted to the early practice of debate for their subsequent success. The debating societies, common before the interest in athletics had become almost a craze, have generally disintegrated, and at a recent contest between Harvard and Yale the Honorable Chauncey M. Depew, the presiding officer, himself, when he chooses, one of the most versatile of extemporaneous orators, among other suggestive remarks, said:

"There is, and there always will be, as great a demand for public speaking and as great an opportunity for it as was the case in what is known as the days of great orators. But the last twenty

Testimony of the most facile of contemporary orators.

years of college history has not produced a single famous orator in the United States. This is seen mostly in the courts, upon the political platform, and in the decadence of popular oratory in the Senate, in Congress, and in the various halls of legislation of the country."

A statement so comprehensive will doubtless excite controversy, but it is to be observed that he limits the declaration to twenty years of college history, and it is certain that several of those who have attracted public notice as orators within the past twenty years have, without a college training, attained a wide reputation.

Mr. Depew declared that he looked upon the present revival of the debating society with the expectation of seeing "a new generation come forth from the colleges not only panoplied with a magnificent education, but able to utilize it in the thousands of places where the educated man is called upon to make use of his power—in the defense of right, in the securing of justice, in directors' meetings, in the courts of law, in the pulpit, everywhere and anywhere lucidly and carefully expressing the judgment he has formed."

Easy for the novice.

It is not so difficult for beginners to speak in a debate where the standards of rhetorical criticism are lower, the audience more excited, the time limited, formal introductions and perorations superfluous, and a colloquial style preferable, as to

appear the first time in the pulpit or on the lecture platform. The circumstances and especially the decision by judges or the audience upon the merits of each side and of individual participants compel and assist mental concentration and prompt and forcible expression. Fluency and confidence once obtained, style can be polished and adaptive facility secured by practice.

The essays and colloquial criticisms of the same, in the secret societies, contribute much to the formation of a good written style, and to the expression of one's ideas without oratorical accompaniments; but very little to the acquisition of a vigorous, coherent, and diversified extemporaneous style.

Dangerous habit of mind.

The debating habit of mind is not without its perils, for there have been many who, though skillful fencers in debate, have so devoted themselves to it as to lose the power of abstract reflection, and have become useless in a deliberative body except in periods of partisan conflict; and their influence, even there, often fails prematurely. Such lawyers lose their influence over judges, and such legislators their power over colleagues and constituents. Ecclesiastical debaters, unable to suggest a rational plan or modification, but ever ready to attack the suggestions of others, and liable to produce schemes of doubtful morality or obvious inexpediency, come at last to be regarded with

a degree of suspicion which renders their efforts weakening to the cause which they espouse.

Paralyzed virtue and wisdom.

But as numerous are the instances of wise and good men who, because of ignorance of parliamentary law and a feeble control of their resources, wield little influence, and pass through life bewildered by the success of some whose sophistries their keen minds easily detect, whose superficiality they pity, and whose pompous pretensions they despise.

There is no other intellectual stimulant or exercise to be compared with debate. It teaches the rash moderation; makes the timid courageous; compels the fluent to prune; the slow to hasten; renders the dull quick-witted; requires the quick-witted to learn caution; and fits all classes for an intellectual emergency. The ability to debate is a powerful means of enabling one to defend his own rights, and to aid the weak in securing theirs. It is essential in free governments. If only the corrupt and grasping have this power, the best in the commonwealth will be tyrannized over by the worst.

The truly wise are those who ever aim at symmetrical development and the mastery of every legitimate means of persuading their fellow-men. Such only are able to perform ordinary tasks easily, and are always ready to respond to extraordinary demands.

CHAPTER XXXI

Character as a General Preparation

That confidence in the integrity of a speaker is essential to a conviction of the truth of his words is self-evident. No less obvious is it that such confidence must depend upon personal acquaintance, the testimony of those who are intimate with him, the evidence of position or credentials conferred by those who know him, or by the public. Each and all of these sources of trust in a speaker rest finally upon his real or supposed character.

The more logical a person known to be untrustworthy, the more the intelligent hearer is upon his guard; and the more lofty, persuasive, or insinuating the eloquence of one in repute for self-seeking, treachery to friends, or readiness to receive bribes, the harder become the hearts of all but the inexperienced or the credulous.

Seeming exceptions among lawyers.

If the members of the legal profession—especially those engaged exclusively in criminal cases—seem to furnish many exceptions, it should be noted that the personnel of juries changes with courts and often with cases, that evidence performs in large part the work of conviction, and that the controlling factor in the decision is often an

emotional state pervading a community, of which the dishonest advocate is but the voice.

More destructive of such apparent exceptions is the fact that if counselors are recognized by the community as unscrupulous, it creates against any prisoner who employs them a prejudice in the minds of the jury and the court. Thus practice falls away from them early in life; except when they are located adjacent to prisons in large cities, and become masters of the intricacies of "jury fixing," of legal technicalities, tricks, and the manufacture of spurious alibis.

Clerical masqueraders.

Clergymen who appear to have much zeal are sometimes revealed as living double lives, and their previous success is to many an insoluble problem. Yet it is often found that a penetrating few had suspected them; that they had been at the mercy of some who had detected them; or that their success was superficial, and powerful friends had protected them.

The existence of chemical springs below the surface of the ground of a destructive nature may not be known for ages, but should the earth's crust from any cause become thin, they burst forth, filling the air with mephitic vapors and scalding fluids.

The reader and the reciter, when insincere, may disguise themselves more easily, but the extemporizer, unless insanely self-deceived, not

daring to abandon himself at any time to an imagination which he knows to be polluted, or a memory which is the treasury of spurious as well as sterling coin, is ever like a hobbled steed.

Why many wield no influence.

When one looks around him he finds men equal in ability to most of those who have become permanently influential, yet who have little convincing or persuasive force. Inquiry brings to light no other cause of failure than lack of noble character and the reputation which accompanies it. He who cultivates soundness of judgment, kindness of spirit, and sterling integrity accumulates a form of general preparation which will give the effect of power to a stammering tongue, of music to a harsh voice, of grace to an uncouth gesture, and of coherence to a lame argument; for the many who wish to be led will follow such a one, and those who think for themselves will not lightly reject the opinions of one whom they can but respect.

The testimony of a philosopher.

That shrewd observer and deep student of human nature, BENJAMIN FRANKLIN, records in his diary that Lord FITZ MAURICE asking him for advice, "mentioned the old story of DEMOSTHENES' answer to one who demanded what was the first point of oratory. Action. The second? Action. The third? Action. Which, I said, had been generally understood to mean the action of an orator with his hands; but that I thought another

kind of action of more importance to an orator who would persuade people to follow his advice, namely, such a course of action in the conduct of life as would impress them with an opinion of his integrity as well as of his understanding; that, this opinion once established, all the difficulties, delays, and oppositions, usually caused by doubts and suspicions, were prevented; and such a man, though a very imperfect speaker, would almost always carry his points against the most flourishing orator who had not the character of sincerity."*

Collapse certain.

The cord which attaches a good reputation to an evil character is longer in some instances than others, but in all it either snaps suddenly or wears away strand by strand. To such a man CROMWELL said: "Sir, I perceive that you have been vastly wary in your conduct of late. Be not too confident in this. Subtlety may deceive you. Honesty never will."

* Franklin's Diary, July 27, 1784.

CHAPTER XXXII

Special Preparation

The specialties of public speech are sermons, pleadings in courts, popular lectures and those of the professor to his classes, anniversary, commemorative, and inaugural orations, after-dinner speeches, political discussions, and the debates of legislative, ecclesiastical, and other deliberative assemblies.

To a certain point the method of preparing for an extemporaneous effort is essentially the same in all cases; beyond that the object, the occasion, and the assembly indicate what modification should be made.

Pulpit discourse.

A sermon may be either the discussion of a topic, the exposition and illustration of a text, a series of observations, or be wholly a persuasive appeal.

The minister, perceiving that his people need the presentation of a certain subject, prepares himself to treat it; or a theme suggested by conversation, reading, or reflection may strongly impress him. Experience and observation have shown that it is impossible to find any topic appropriate to the Christian pulpit which would not profit many could it be made to produce a salutary effect upon

any. Frequently an orator is struck by a thought, and at once a satisfactory plan automatically forms and is ready for elaboration.

Extracting the radix.

When the clergyman shall have determined upon a topic or a text the first thing to do is to comprehend its root idea. It will not be sufficient merely to apprehend it. Any intelligent person can grasp what is said upon something with which he is familiar; but in addition to the mere perception of the meaning of the terms of the proposition, he must comprehend and isolate it, looking around it and through it without being distracted by anything else.

In the exposition of a text the same principle applies: for it contains one topic or more; if one, the root idea must be comprehended; if more, the same process must be followed with each member. When this is attained the speaker need not examine lexicons for definitions; root ideas define themselves. Without this isolation it is impossible to determine how much explanation is necessary. The object of a speaker is to convince those who at the outset do not believe his proposition, and this must be done by proof. But how is he to obtain his proof? By contemplating the root idea in its relation to doubts, problems, prejudices, and predispositions.

Excess of proof obstructive.

Sometimes a speaker having evolved a root idea, stated a definition, explained it thoroughly,

and furnished proofs that are confirmed by his own experiences and those of his audience, perceives that almost everyone in the assembly agrees with him. It is folly for him to elaborate what is obvious, but frequently he does not perceive this. A friend said to DANIEL WEBSTER, "How did you come to lose that case?" and the reply was, "I overproved it."

As a student of human nature, a speaker should know precisely what objections are in men's minds, and his germ thought will reveal to him the method of answering them. After this preliminary work is done there is no conscious tax upon the recollection. The root suggests the definition, the definition the explanation, and the explanation shows where proofs are necessary and what should be their nature.

When persuasion is essential to success, such a method would be ineffective. It would be too abstract, and exert no more influence upon the heart than the demonstration of a proposition in trigonometry.

The appeal.

When the proof is complete and the objections are removed the speaker's only recourse is to pass out of the abstract into the concrete. Suppose the theme to be repentance: The minister comprehends the root idea, distinguishes it from regret, remorse, and penitence, and shows that everyone who has sinned can and should repent,

and must do so if he would secure pardon. The listeners are convinced, but unmoved; therefore he must throw the subject into the concrete, and draw a realistic picture of their present position, portray their utter unconcern, show that they act and speak as though they had never sinned. The minister may then picture to himself one in that congregation whose hospitality he has received and whom he loves; and fixing his eye upon that man, think within himself: "He is unrepentant. I have enjoyed his friendship and have preached the Gospel to him, but he will sink into darkness unless I can persuade him to repent to-day." The minister must speak to *him*, establish communication between that man's eye and his own, his tongue and that man's ear. This done, the situation is changed. Those who a few moments before only saw the truth now feel it. If the minister be incapable of making the transition, it is because of his lack of interest or slavery to routine.

A thought rosary.

A sermon consisting of a series of pertinent observations is often profitable. When JOHN SUMMERFIELD was delighting and moving all classes by his eloquence he did not dwell upon any one point, but said a little, most appropriate and suggestive, upon many points. Yet there is a heavy tax upon the memory, unless the observations be so arranged that the first will suggest the second, and the second, the third. If the matter is of such

a nature that this cannot be done—though it seldom is if sufficient reflection be given to it—one may choose among several methods.

Observations may be numbered and treated in that order; or the successive points be strung upon the letters of the alphabet. Some so arrange them as to spell a word. By this method one quite popular speaker arranged his heads so that the first word in the root idea would begin with the letter *a*, and the second with *d*, and so to the end of the word *advantageous*. This is the secret of many systems of mnemonics. An acquaintance of mine builds his discourses upon the word *martyr*.

These schemes are unnecessary. Most persons are in the habit of saying that they have no memory, meaning no power of recollection. A business man will frequently gaze with wonder upon speakers who, without a note, will treat with propriety and force many subjects, repeat figures, proper names, and give dates; he will say, "I wish my memory was as good as yours."

A convincing shorter catechism.

I was lecturing in a Western capital upon a subject requiring the bringing forward of many historical and geographical facts, and at the close a gentleman said, "I would give my income for a year to have your memory." Happening to be familiar with his career, I said:

"Are you not treasurer of the State?"

"Yes."

"Are you not president of a line of steamers?"

"I am."

"President of a board of trustees of a college?"

"I have that honor."

"Director in several banks, besides being president of one?"

"Yes."

"Were you not for thirty years in mercantile pursuits?"

"I was."

"Are you not guardian for several distinct sets of wards?"

"I carry that responsibility."

"Then," said I, "I would like to ask you one more question: Do you not think that if a man were to ask you about an important business transaction which you have had with him in the course of your life, the papers relating to which are destroyed, that you could settle up the business so as to produce an equitable result?"

"Probably I could."

In that man's brain cells were more facts, figures, and personal experiences than would be needed to furnish every day for a decade material for a lecture as long as the one which he had heard. He had applied to business his power of recollection; I, mine to preparing addresses.

In discourses primarily for persuasion the orator

may lay a foundation in demonstration and then throw himself into the concrete; or when everything is taken for granted and the community is at a white heat, either from religious or political excitement, he may plunge at once into his appeal.

The "now" of eloquence.

In courts of justice pleading on points of law is addressed to the judges, in which case root ideas, definitions, explanations, and proofs are to be elucidated precisely as in the case of a sermon. When juries are to be influenced this method is too cold to fuse twelve men into a common sentiment. They are liable to pass from the court room to the place of consultation, a collection of units. In such civil cases as allow the feelings to play any part, an easy speaker who does not prolong his discussions to weariness may accomplish wonders. This was the method of Aaron Burr, who rarely, if ever, lost a case which he personally conducted, and he seldom spoke over half an hour. Judah P. Benjamin, who after the failure of the Confederacy went to England and became one of the leading barristers of that nation, possessed this power in a high degree. But in criminal cases and such as involve pathos, where personages often take precedence of principles, it is unsafe for a pleader to remain long in the realm of the abstract.

The lawyer's charm.

It is interesting to notice with what attention an ignorant juryman will listen to something he

cannot understand, when it occurs in a short interval between two pathetic or rousing appeals.

The manipulation of evidence in close juxtaposition with the law affords lawyers opportunity for every form of eloquence.

In the class room.

The lectures of the professor, consisting of explanation, demonstration, illustration — except in the departments of literature, particularly rhetoric, including elocution—deal sparingly with the emotions. Accuracy, lucidity, self-possession, and intellectuality, warmed by enthusiasm, are the requirements of successful class-room instruction.

The platform lecturer can easily be encumbered with an excess of system. Fancy, wit, and, what is more effective than either, humor, are essentials, except in the case of scientific lectures popularized by the fame of the lecturer or the exhibition of phenomena, and even then a few unexpected episodes will contribute to general satisfaction.

Preparing for the unusual.

Addresses on special subjects require careful preparation, principally to protect the orator from the mannerisms of his vocation.

Discussions on the rostrum resemble in some particulars the arguments of the courts. Documents, speeches of opponents, and occasionally legislative acts must be introduced. As a rule, a political meeting is managed upon the plan of bringing forward, to deliver the opening speech, a senator, judge, or other intellectual dignitary of

the party, to be followed by lighter weights, in manner if not in substance, and at the close, some one to make "the rafters ring."

When one of several speakers.

The preparation necessary depends upon the place which the speaker is to fill. If he be the first, the entire field of relevant thought is his, but should he come later, he must be ready to fill a different rôle from that of his predecessor. If the latter was tame, he should be animated, but if exceedingly witty, keeping the people in roars of laughter, he should be grave and argumentative, at least for a time. The same ideas can be used to produce either of these effects. If gravity be sought, abstract treatment must predominate; if the opposite effect is desired, it is necessary only to view the subject concretely and illustrate by likeness or contrast.

The replication.

Having made a table of arguments and considerations on each side—testing them beforehand for himself, not waiting for critic or antagonist—the debater should endeavor to prepare a fair answer to every point that his opponent can make, and be equally ready to reply to attacks upon his own arguments. These are to be held not in the open field of consciousness, but in such a way that the moment the thought is presented the previous preparation will be suggested.

The debater who speaks first has the subject and occasion entirely under his control, and the

opportunity of making a convincing speech, which may require the best efforts of a number of his opponents to overthrow. It is a wonderful advantage to address minds not wearied by concentration or nauseated by repetition. In such a situation he may point out that to agree on the main contention it is not necessary to do so for the same reasons or to concur in opinion upon every detail. He should endeavor to answer what he suspects his adversary will say against his affirmative arguments, and to expose any error in the propositions which he has reason to think will be employed against him.

Dangers and safeguards for debaters.

If one be not the first speaker on his own side, he is in danger of having another advocate the same views which he holds, perhaps in such a bungling or extravagant manner as to occasion him more trouble than all his opponents. Such a colleague damages the cause by bristling with points for attack, and leading those who have given little consideration to the subject to contract a prejudice against it.

If there is to be an opportunity to reply, a debater may be tempted to postpone some of his best matter for the replication. This is the resort of the feeble or timid. The best mode is to state fairly, as soon as possible, what one holds, and why. If he has a long time to speak, he should present a powerful argument within two minutes

after beginning. He may then corroborate it by weaker, but still important, propositions, being cautious never to introduce anything which will not bear inspection or which will divert attention from the main line. As the time to close draws near he should recapitulate, and finish with his strongest considerations. Whether he shall confine himself chiefly to argument, or introduce emotional or persuasive appeals, depends upon the character of the assembly, and in particular upon the nature of those whom he wishes to gain.

He who is first on the negative may choose between making a direct attack on his predecessor's last or strongest argument and laying a foundation by which to undermine him utterly at a later period of the speech. Which would be the safer course depends on the state of feeling when he rises, and also on what he can trust himself to do the more effectively, a sudden onset or a flank movement.

Component parts of an assembly.

At every legislative or ecclesiastical debate there are present extremists who cannot be affected by anything that may be said. Some are bound by party chains; others were never reasoned into the position which they hold, but are under the influence of prepossession or prejudice. There are those, also, whose minds are not yet made up, or, if they fancy they are, the resolution is not solidified. Besides these, there is always a con-

siderable number willing to make compromise propositions, or present substitutes for everything before the house. And it should not be forgotten that there is always a contingent who are in a state of plastic doubt.

The tendency of some debaters is to waste energy in endeavoring to convince the unconvincible and persuade the unyielding. The principal aim should be to make recruits from those who have no decided opinion; and in connection with that to strengthen the convictions of those of one's own way of thinking who may have been weakened by the attacks of opponents.

The silent pendulum.

A serious practical problem confronts every debater when he has thought long and deeply on both sides. He may conclude that there is little difference between them, yet he honestly believes the one he proposes to advocate. Unless he knows how to develop oratorical fervor, even when there is but a slight difference between the weight of the respective sides, he will produce little impression.

Within a few years has passed away a college president who was an eloquent orator and influential member of the Senate of Massachusetts. He often failed in a critical emergency in consequence of seeing so much on both sides of all questions that at any stage he could have exchanged places with his opponent.

How is this to be avoided? In one, and but one, way;—by foreshortening the perspective of his opponents' views and enlarging his own. If he thinks that much may be brought forward truthfully on the other side, it should develop charity for his opponents and remove acrimony from his own speech. But as he believes his own position to be right, and that the prevalence of his sentiments will be beneficial, he should arouse himself so that, though he states his opponents' arguments fairly and calmly, in reply or direct argument he will utter his own convictions with overwhelming force.

Stirring one's own fire.

There is no reason why a man should not deliver an argument, in itself dry as dust, with all the feeling he would have while making a stirring appeal. It will contribute to his warmth if he listens intently to the other side, endeavoring to answer mentally each argument as it is uttered.

After-dinner speeches are at once the easiest and most difficult of oratorical feats. Too much preparation will cause a failure, and too little may result in lowering the speaker in his own opinion or in the estimate of the assembly. It is difficult to hold the attention of a company exhausted by devotion to an elaborate menu, after several others have spoken. The first speaker usually has a weighty theme and more time than

Post-prandial toasts and tests.

will be allowed others. This frequently leads to the infliction of a prosy address, during or at the close of which many of the guests will depart. College presidents at alumni banquets are often sinners in this respect. No speaker who values his reputation should rise utterly unprepared; the risk is too great. A root idea with "limbs and flourishes" is the safest method. The flights attempted should be graceful and short. An after-dinner audience does not relish speeches which "smell of the oil."

Avoiding icebergs

There is a peril to which many speakers are exposed. Having elicited laughter or applause by an incident, a witticism, or an epigram, they go on in vain efforts to maintain or surpass the effects thus, perhaps accidentally, produced.

But if one can rely on himself, and, in case of a slip, can gather himself so quickly that either it will not be perceived or will be immediately forgotten, he may sail over this treacherous sea as gracefully as a yacht in a summer breeze.

Usually the best after-dinner speeches do not read well, and when they do the presumption is that they were voted dry. The speeches of Mayor Abram S. Hewitt, however, read well, and some of them in delivery rivaled in interest those of Joseph H. Choate or Chauncey M. Depew, wizards of the banquet, the former a hypnotizer of judge and jury.

CHAPTER XXXIII

Preliminary Physical Preparation

A seductive error.

In former ages the interdependence of mental and physical health was recognized only by the few who had investigated more thoroughly than their contemporaries and were familiar with the lucubrations of the truly wise among the ancients.

It is now universally admitted, but practically disregarded by a majority who fancy that they can continue active exertion up to the moment of publicly speaking. Many have been led astray as to their own powers by observing that certain lawyers appear able to work continuously, and that without intervening periods of rest political speakers and professional evangelists manifest surprising energy and fervor, conversing almost continually in the intervals of their speeches. Were they to examine closely the efforts thus made, they would perceive that, unless one live constantly in such a routine, reducing the outflow of vitality to the least possible amount, such achievements would be impossible. "What one does every day he can do any day." Advocates when physically unfitted are able to protect themselves by asking a continuance, by prolonging the examination of witnesses, or by arguing

incidental points of law until the hour of adjournment, so that they may secure a night's rest before making the critical effort. Moreover, much that they do in the trial of a case is done calmly, so that they are not under such pressure as the uninitiated might suppose. Only when unexpected points are raised or unforeseen contingencies of a serious nature are thrust upon them are they severely taxed.

Campaign speakers labor under abnormal excitement, and stake their constitutions. Some endure; others destroy themselves. Frequently at the close of presidential campaigns stump speakers are prostrated; some, as the result of overexcitement, loss of sleep, and irregular habits, become insane.

Peripatetic speakers.

Evangelists have few discourses and constantly repeat them; in all such courses of life there is a possibility of becoming accustomed to rhythmical developments of excitement which ebb and flow, leaving the system little the worse. Several have told me that immediately after concluding impassioned exhortations they can retire and be asleep almost as soon as they touch the pillow. One attributed it to his confidence in God. He had done what he could, and after invoking God's blessing upon his work, there was no reason why he should not receive the benefit of the promise, "For so he giveth his beloved sleep."

Notwithstanding this, such evangelists are unable to continue their work more than half the year. Those who extend their labors over a longer period usually lose force or break down in what should be the prime of life.

Lecturers delivering the same discourses night after night, their emotions not stirred, expenditure being principally intellectual, can travel during the day, and with time for rest and refreshment before the effort can endure a long series of engagements. But many have found it necessary to resort to arbitrary rules of hygiene, and among professional lecturers the number of general or nervous collapses is not small.

Energy and fervor are qualities necessary to the success of an address. Listless speakers do not receive attention; nor will mere muscular effort and vociferation suffice; the countenance, gesture, and voice must indicate earnestness.

Hygienic wisdom.

When an important address is to be delivered the orator should begin the special care of his body at least twenty-four hours before the time. Henry Ward Beecher, addressing the Clerical Union of Brooklyn, stated that this was his invariable practice, and that, though he had a powerful constitution, he made it a point to eat less and rest more as Sunday approached. On his lecture tours he was in the habit of taking a short nap just before going to the platform. A good night's sleep

and sound digestion are essential to adequate preparation. One of the most successful lawyers in New York city, in constant practice, takes nothing but a cracker for luncheon when he has to return to court in the afternoon.

Unintended suicide.

A dangerous practice is that indulged by some of dining heartily before making an address. A clergyman of my acquaintance, invited to dine on board a man-of-war in the harbor of New York, conversed and gourmandized until 7 P. M., when, remembering that he had an address to make, he was quickly rowed to shore, and hastening to the church, entered the pulpit and began. After speaking fifteen minutes he was stricken with apoplexy; a post-mortem showed that this was the consequence of issuing two drafts at the same time upon his nerve capital—one for the digestion of a heterogeneous mass, and the other for the production of an impassioned speech.

A bishop, having an important afternoon engagement, dined so heartily as to astonish his fellow-guests, and then preached in so listless a manner that his congregation were utterly wearied. On his expressing wonder that he was so circumscribed in speaking, a friend cynically observed that he might have prayed before he went to the church, but he certainly did not fast.

To converse much before delivering a speech is unphilosophical. A famous billiard player

brought suit against a man who had wagered upon the success of his competitor for hiring some one to go to his house when he was resting preparatory to the contest and engage him in conversation, so that he would be unfitted to play with his usual skill.

Unstring the harp.

Athletes, singers, and actors are obliged to rest and to avoid excitement. The reader may take more liberties with himself than those who extemporize, but as he is deprived of many advantages by confinement to the paper, and as his voice is naturally weaker than that of the speaker, he, too, needs preliminary care.

Whenever it is possible, one intending to speak at length should repose for some time flat upon his back, and go without haste to the appointed place. It is true that there are men possessing extraordinary constitutions so that they can walk three or even ten miles and preach several times on the same day; but it has been noticed that these often begin languidly, and by bodily exercise and vocal action gradually work themselves into liberty.

A well-known orator, who frequently speaks several times in one day, refuses private entertainment, and three times in one day has been known to disrobe and retire as if for a night's repose.

An always-trimmed lamp.

Dr. Theodore L. Cuyler, while in the arduous duties of a large pastorate, requiring two discourses

on the Sabbath, into which he threw vast energy, depended for vivacity in the evening upon several hours' sleep on Sunday afternoon, on which account he facetiously spoke of having eight days in his week.

HOLYOAKE in his work, *Hints on the Application of Logic*, has a paragraph which he omitted from the revised edition, published forty years afterward, but which is more practical than some passages which he did not omit:

Learning one's limitations.

"When traveling expenses were the only payment I received for my lectures I used to walk to the place of their delivery. On my walk from Birmingham to Worcester, a distance of twenty-six miles, it was my custom to recite on the way portions of my intended address. In the early part of my walk my voice was clear and thoughts ready, but toward the end I could scarcely articulate or retain the thread of my discourse. If I lectured the same evening, as sometimes happened, I spoke without connection or force. The reason was that I had exhausted my strength on the way. One Saturday I walked from Sheffield to Huddersfield to deliver on the Sunday two anniversary lectures. It was my first appearance there, and I was ambitious to acquit myself well, but in the morning I was utterly unable to do more than talk half inaudibly and quite incoherently. In the evening I was tolerable, but my

voice was weak. My annoyance was excessive. I was a paradox to myself. My power seemed to come and go by some eccentric law of its own. I did not find out till years after that the utter exhaustion of my strength had exhausted the powers of speech and thought, and that entire repose, instead of entire fatigue, should have been the preparation for public speaking."

Warning examples.

Those who are obliged to speak several times a day need protracted periods of rest; for the pathological effects of excessive talking are analogous to those of excessive writing. Some of the worst cases of aphasia have been brought on in this way, and public speakers have been alarmed by finding that they could not articulate distinctly, or that they uttered a different word from that which was intended, or that their power of public speech seemed on the verge of departing. On consulting nerve specialists, the only prescription given has been to intermit speech for a few days or weeks, or in some cases to be absolutely silent for three hours before making a public address.

Some authorities maintain that the premature decline of power, while the reflective faculties appear of normal strength, is to be explained as the results of overaction. Those who do not observe hygienic rules are strongly tempted to the use of stimulants. Many a brilliant orator about to speak in court or upon the rostrum, and some

clergymen, finding themselves dull, have gradually resorted to stimulants, thus inducing nervous prostration. Dr. J. Hughlings Jackson, an authority not to be suspected of incompetence, narrowness, or prejudice, in his lecture before the Neurological Society, on "The Central Nervous System," speaking of the highest level of that system, the so-called organ of mind, physical basis of mind, etc., observes that "In case of general bodily fatigue and certain states of ill health, scarcely to be called abnormal, after taking a small quantity of alcohol (only as much alcohol, let us suppose, as, according to the Scotch witness, makes a man not worse but better for liquor), there is increased mental activity *of a sort*, a great flow of ideas. In this mentation there is, I think, mainly an increase of the first *half* of thought, tracing resemblances, while the noting of differences, second 'half' of thought, is diminished; or, to use popular language, there is greater 'brilliancy' with less 'judgment.' If so, it is not a desirable condition even from a nonmedical point of view."* Reputation has suffered because of eccentricities of speech or action exposing to suspicion of mental derangement, which were afterward found to have been caused by intoxication.

Gilded but not gold.

A victim of this habit was taken by his parishioners to an asylum, they supposing him to be

* *The Lancet*, London, January 8, 1898.

deranged. The superintendent, not wishing to ruin the reputation of the patient, responded to a question as to how long he would be liable to be detained, that it was impossible to decide, as he was then in a "wholly artificial" condition.

Food and stimulants.

JAMES PARTON, in his article, "Will the Coming Man Drink Wine?" philosophically discusses the relation of wine to banquets and after-dinner speaking, laying down the principle that, if men eat much, they will be compelled to use stimulants. One cannot eat a hearty meal and make an animated speech. The most successful after-dinner speakers refuse many of the courses. Not all, however, are wise enough to protect themselves, and those who do not, if much in demand, are soon worn out. Two friends, one noted for occasional speeches of remarkable brilliancy, the other for never failing, occupied adjacent seats at a banquet. The first was a gourmand, the other a gourmét. The speech of the former was a failure, and that of his friend a great success. When the latter sat down the former said, "How *do* you do it?" The reply was sufficient: "I do one thing at a time."

Quinine has been habitually used as a stimulant by a few public speakers. The quinine habit is almost as injurious to the nervous system as is the alcohol habit, inducing in some premature deafness and in others various morbid conditions.

One of the worst final effects is the necessity of using narcotics to compose a system shattered by undue excitation.

Inexpensive prescription.

The best tonic is pure air, and whenever possible, a speaker should spend a while in the open air, inhaling through his nostrils deep drafts. Half of Saturday spent in this way by a clergyman will accomplish much, and even one hour spent in the open air or in a thoroughly ventilated room will renovate the vital forces and admit of beginning work with vigor.

Dr. McIlvaine, discussing "Vitality and Physical Regimen," assumes it to be an established law that the vital forces will not at the same time inspire the brain and grind in the stomach. He admits that in feeble constitutions this rule requires to be reversed, and deduces the case of the younger Pitt, who, in the latter years of his life, when his constitution was shattered, found it necessary to brace himself up with a hearty meal and a couple of bottles of wine before delivering one of his great speeches in Parliament. The fact, however, is that he always found this imperative, and his premature breaking down was to be attributed to nonrestraint of his appetite and to stimulants taken to overcome the lethargy natural after overeating. When physical strength is not fully adequate some food should be taken, but in a concentrated and easily digested form.

Tea and coffee.

There are occasions, especially when one has traveled until within a few moments of the time of speaking, when to eat nothing would be pernicious; or when one having eaten, finds himself languid. Two stimulants, everywhere accessible, tea and coffee, are specially beneficial if not used ordinarily, and most effectual when taken upon an empty stomach. While the essential principle of these herbs is the same, there are certain effects characteristic of each. French biologists, chemists, and hygienists, with a view of deciding which is better for soldiers in camp or on the march, have given profound study to the influence of tea and coffee. They have found that, while both stimulate the sensory and the motor nerves, tea affects the sensory much more than the motor, and coffee the motor more than the sensory. Hence they recommend the latter when prolonged physical exertion is required.

I was particularly interested in the results of their studies because I had made that discovery years before from my own experience. When on pedestrian tours I found coffee much the more effective stimulant; and when dull and obliged to write tea seemed more in harmony with mental activity and a sedentary position.

It is related of Henry Ward Beecher that, after a long journey, on arriving at a residence where he was to be entertained, having but a short time

to rest before lecturing, he was asked which he preferred, tea or coffee. "Coffee," said he. "I am going to lecture; if it were a funeral address, I should take tea. Tea quickens the mind without rousing the body, but coffee fills a man with vigor from head to foot."

The less the better even of these.

These "innocent herbs" are powerful drugs, and I found it necessary to abstain, because under their use I was never conscious of healthy fatigue, and profusely expended vitality without being aware of it. A small quantity of either coffee or tea is now sufficient to overcome lassitude. It should be remembered that some cannot without food take coffee without its toxic effects appearing in undue energy of manner and violence in epithets. One of such a temperament says that he never takes coffee unless he wishes to use more expletives than substantives, and more adverbs than verbs.

If neither coffee nor tea can be obtained, sipping half a pint of very hot water will produce so satisfactory an effect that some have affirmed that it is the heat of the tea and coffee which is so efficacious. Experiment proves that this is not the case, for ice-cold coffee or tea is stimulating, although an unwholesome beverage if taken with food.

CHAPTER XXXIV

Special Preparation of Feeling

The reasoning faculties can be commanded, and the powers of recollection and imagination in well-disciplined minds are obedient to the will; but no one can evoke emotion by an act of volition. He cannot say to his soul, "The hour is come; be glad, be gay, be deeply stirred!" The habit of speaking at a given time may engender mere oratorical excitement when required; but this is not the feeling which is to make one eloquent. That must include the whole being.

If a man cannot command his feelings, he can indirectly affect them; and the best method is to meditate upon the subject, the occasion, and those who are to be influenced. Abstraction is holding the mind to an intellectual process; reflection is a general turning over of ideas, but meditation differs from each of these processes. It is a blending of revery and abstraction with an intense desire that emotion shall arise. One does not long hold himself in meditation, nor attempt to concentrate the mind as he does in abstraction, or even in reflection. The intellectual faculties are driven with a loose rein, allowed to wander over the entire field.

Distinctions frequently disregarded.

Consciousness of the train of thought is lost, and the man awakes to find his soul stirred. He may discover that he has unconsciously risen or, finding his arms extended in gesture, become aware that he is speaking to himself. He thinks of the issues and feels as though he would like at once to go before the people and present the subject.

The minister's vocation and responsibility.

The preacher professes a divine call. Different religious bodies take different views of its nature, some holding it to be a distinct impression, having the moral force of a divine commission. Others consider it a strong inference from one's personal religious experience, his fitness for such a work, and various providential indications. Still others doubt the existence of anything specific in the impression, and describe the minister as an honest man who desires to do the greatest good in the world, and comes to the conclusion that this can be accomplished by devoting himself to the ministry. In any case the sincere preacher must believe his efforts to be the most important that he could make. He sees the transcendent results of a belief in or a rejection of the Christian religion. He recognizes the need of constant instruction, warning, and consolation to prevent the disciples of Christ from wandering. He also knows that if he is not a successful preacher of the Gospel, he will simply be endured. Therefore, whenever

he appears in public it should be to him a momentous occasion. It should not be difficult to create or renew this impression, for since he believes his teachings to be of divine origin, their acceptance essential to moral and spiritual development and to happiness in this world and the next, it is impossible to conceive a true Christian content without daily consciousness of strong emotion. The Apostles of Christianity, whatever their personal characteristics, exhibited intense emotion. Divine earnestness, pathos, love, yearning of spirit, and holy joy inspired them, and they stirred one another to works of faith and self-sacrifice by zealous exhortations and fervent prayers. The doctrines of Christianity expressed without emotion are powerless to reach the hearts or influence the characters of men.

Belief in spiritual aid.

Every discourse must have a purpose and be connected with the preacher's religious life. Addresses can be prepared upon ordinary and extraordinary topics, without a belief or utilization of a belief that a special divine influence is essential to success; but this is impossible with respect to a sermon, unless it is of a merely historical nature or relates to mere secular aspects of Church work.

There is some defect in that Christian preacher who, in his meditations in the study and in the act of preaching, has never been conscious of an influence unlike that which the orator feels upon

other subjects. He who, as to the state of his feelings, has had no different experience in preaching from that which he has had in delivering political, scholastic, educational, or moral addresses, has missed something which has ever been the chief source of the highest pulpit eloquence. The New Testament affirms that the fruits of the Spirit are love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, meekness, faith, and promises special help in expounding the principles of the Gospel and persuading the hearts of men. The minister must expect such aid, and, by all the methods with which the devout Christian is acquainted, prepare himself to receive it.

Among those methods are self-examination, prayer, the rectification of one's own motives, dependence upon the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and a continual expectation of special preparation from that source; so that when he ascends the pulpit he is imbued with the conviction that he is sent there by God to preach the Gospel.

Other professions.

Other vocations furnish their own stimulants. The incidents leading to the Revolutionary War made plain men heroes, orators, and statesmen. So each profession includes within its principles and practice an ever-changing series of objective realities and ideal conceptions, which will yield in their measure the stimulus to the imagination and the emotions which the Christian

preacher receives in so large a degree. Meditation should be carried so far as to set free the imagination. No author, ancient or modern, has treated the subject so graphically as QUINTILIAN, equally famous as an advocate, an orator of occasions, and a teacher of oratory. He says:

"By what means, it may be asked, shall we be affected, since our feelings are not in our own power? I will attempt to say something also on this point. What the Greeks call fantasiai we call visions; images by which the representations of absent objects are so distinctly represented to the mind that we seem to see them with our eyes, and to have them before us. Whosoever shall best conceive such images will have the greatest power in moving the feelings. A man of such lively imagination some call euphantasiotos, being one who can vividly represent to himself things, voices, actions, with exactness of reality; and this faculty may readily be acquired by ourselves if we desire it.

Imagination's heart-warming power.

"When, for example, while the mind is unoccupied and we are indulging in chimerical hopes and dreams, as of men awake, the images of which I am speaking beset us so closely that we seem to be on a journey, or a voyage, in a battle, to be haranguing assemblies of people, to dispose of wealth which we do not possess, and not to be thinking, but acting, shall we not turn this lawful

power of our minds to our advantage? I make complaint that a man has been murdered; shall I not bring before my eyes everything that is likely to have happened when the murder occurred? Shall not the assassin suddenly sally forth? Shall not the other tremble, cry out, supplicate, or flee? Shall I not behold the one striking, the other falling? Shall not the blood and paleness and last gasp of the expiring victim present itself fully to my mental view?" *

A modern testimony.

A modern orator said that if through stress of circumstances he had but one hour in which to prepare for the highest possible effort, and a human life was at stake, his own or that of another who had trusted his fate to his eloquence, he would give the larger part of the time to rousing his soul to the exigency, and to enkindling within himself the passions which he wished to arouse in others.

What is this but to say that emotional preparedness is at least as necessary to eloquence as intellectual?

* *The Education of the Orator*, Book vi, chapter 2.

CHAPTER XXXV

Addressing the Assembly

The hour for his address having arrived, the orator rises; and forces, which have been flitting hither and thither like electric currents seeking outlet, concentrate.

Creditable solicitude.

I assume that the speaker is conscious of agitation. In an ordinary address upon a subject with which he is entirely familiar, where the sole object is enlightenment and the discussion a part of continuous business, there may be no more excitement than is felt by an officer when drilling or reviewing his troops. But if the occasion be important, and the theme one which has thrilled him and must thrill the audience or the oration prove worse than a failure, since so much depends upon first impressions, he, whether sole speaker or to be contrasted with others, will commence with a diffidence akin to fear. Woe to the extemporaneous orator who has reached such an impassive condition that he knows nothing of this experience!

Critical pause.

The extemporizer has no prepared language, not even his first sentence. He has ideas which he intended to present first. If at white heat from previous meditation, he pauses, endeavoring to

steady his nerves and muscles; this instant passed, he utters his first words and the situation is changed. Through his ear the sentence reacts favorably upon him or it does not. If it does not, it is modified not by will, but instinctively, until the sum of that sentence with its qualifying successors coalesces with the current of his thoughts and feelings.

Vocal reserve.

He is not particular to be heard by all in the assembly when he begins. The clergyman, however, reads the text, which being more important than any utterance of his own, he should pronounce with a voice audible in all parts of the auditorium. There are psychological and physiological reasons why in uttering his own sentiment his voice is likely to be weak, and why under ordinary circumstances he should speak slowly. The anxiety of the speaker is incompatible with strength of utterance; his very mouth is dried by it. To speak loud in beginning is to risk hoarseness. The ancient rule, "Begin low; speak slow," is in harmony with nature, but, as frequently quoted, "Rise higher; take fire," is erroneous; taking fire should precede rising higher.

Self-forgetfulness.

The speaker who commences in a pompous manner may be suspected of attempting to palm off a recitation or a speech which has been delivered so frequently as to be practically a recitation. An extemporizer will usually fall a little

below his exordium so soon as he forgets himself. For extemporization is evolution after involution. All conscious thought of voice, gesture, attitude, the audience, and the opinions of people disappears. Something far better takes its place. Some teachers of oratory, who know nothing of the art of extemporizing, or of the science of it, inculcate the maxim that the extemporizer should never forget himself, but remain perfectly conscious of what he is doing and of all that he sees. They are blind leaders of the blind. He must be absorbed in the process of evolution, and he cannot be eloquent until he reaches such a point that, were his garments to be set on fire, he would be burned ere he was aware of it.

Utter absorption.

Something difficult to explain takes the place of ordinary perception followed by conscious reasoning. It is an intuitive perception of the manner in which his ideas are being received. Applause by clap, stamp, or cheer is worth much less to any experienced speaker, as an indication of the effect which he is producing, than what he receives from the countenances of his auditors. Making due allowance for irresistible paroxysms of enthusiasm, it may be affirmed that an audience which can cease listening to cheer is not stirred to the depths. Chrysostom, the golden mouthed, abominated it, and when his emperor and nobles were striking their swords and crying, "Thou art worthy to be

called a priest," he refused to go on unless they would be silent. When, on account of blindness of the eye, speaker or hearer cannot impart or receive the telepathic effect necessary, the ear seems to have a strange power of perceiving the agreement, dissent, or doubt of the auditor.

Invited chastisement should be taken serenely.

A vocal interruption must be replied to if it breaks the spell which the orator is weaving (otherwise it should not be noticed). The orator will then involuntarily turn the full force of his moral and intellectual being upon the hostile interrupter, and must drive him to the wall or lose control of the assembly. The interrupter takes the risk, and is but a child if he complain of the severity of the impact which he provoked.

A friendly critic may do more harm than good, and assuredly will if he brings the speaker's train to a full stop.

When his mind, brain, blood, heart, hands, tongue, lips, vocal cords, and lungs are in harmonious action the orator is indeed a happy man. All that he knows and every combination capable of being made of it are at his service. If the audience has passed under his spell and reciprocates, he is thrilled by the consciousness that "his faculties have their proper object." He feels "the reflex of unimpeded energy" and experiences the quintessence of pleasure.

I have said that the speaker must dismiss all

thought of his voice. The philosophy of this prescription is that when he thinks of his voice, the harmony of his mind and body is disturbed, and his flow of thought checked; he is divorced from the audience. Should his voice rebel to such an extent as to become unmanageable and he be brought back to self-consciousness, he must control himself, change pitch, diminish force, and begin again less vehemently.

Wrestling with the unsympathetic.

He may perceive an aspect of hostility, a smile of pity, or a sneer of contempt. Instantly he must be prepared to determine whether it would be wise to attempt to conquer that hostility by directly concentrating his gaze upon the opponent, or rely upon doing it indirectly by facing the entire assembly until by resistless contagion the foe is forced to succumb or, unyielding, be left in a powerless minority.

To say that the speaker must forget self and audience in his subject, and then to predicate of him actions which imply that he has not done so, is paradoxical; but it is a paradox arising from the poverty of human language. The orator who does not forget himself cannot rise to the heights of eloquence; he must remain in the lower realm of mere statement. But the extemporizer who has risen to loftiest elevation can perceive more and adapt himself more quickly to changed situations than the other. Some philosophers characterize this as a species of clairvoyance, others

term it sympathy; it is but the normal action of the faculties increased to such a rate of speed as to make it impossible for consciousness to keep pace; nevertheless, they do their work with invariable accuracy.

A genius pro tem.

How far superior the work of the genius to that of the man of talent! By the aid of the dictionary passable poems are turned out, but one inspiration of genius produces words which will never die. The extemporizer is often lifted far above his ordinary self. Three minutes of such illumination are worth more than an hour of square and compass reasoning. In the argumentative portions of the discourse it is not to be expected that he will reach this state, for where definition and ratiocination are concerned he must scrutinize everything that comes from his lips. But when he passes from demonstration to appeal he must give rein to his intellectual Pegasus. Mistakes, extravagances, will be forgotten or forgiven if vivified by genuine fire.

This is the ideal situation.

The Dismal Swamp.

If the extemporizer at his best be the happiest of men, it must logically follow that if he be consciously obstructed throughout, he is miserable beyond the power of words to describe.

Said one: "I wished that I might die when my tongue clave to the roof of my mouth, because my heart was cold and my mind confused."

CHAPTER XXXVI

Temptations of the Extemporaneous Speaker

A threshold temptation.

SINCE it is essential to effective public speech to command attention, there lies in wait at the threshold a temptation to resort to unusual means to secure it. Many who practice other methods suppose, and are not backward in suggesting, that the extemporizer is always at his worst when beginning, while others may polish and perfect the exordium to suit the emergency.

The extemporizer is not always at his worst in beginning. For example, when rising under the excitement of debate or when appearing upon a party platform he is greeted with applause, or when on entering the pulpit he feels that a devotional spirit pervades the assembly.

When tempted to the use of outré methods he should remember that whether attention soonest secured is longest retained depends upon how it is won. If it is gained by a startling elocutionary or intellectual performance which, as he proceeds, he cannot surpass or even equal, interest is liable to flag until reaction is complete. Yet in general, and occasionally even under the most favorable circumstances, the beginning may be his most embarrassing moment. Mr. GLADSTONE, when

asked if he never became nervous before speaking, said that he often did in opening a debate, but never in replying. The answer was philosophic.

Under the most unfavorable circumstances, however, the extemporizer has peculiar advantages; that he advances without notes is sufficient to concentrate attention, and even ill-concealed embarrassment excites curiosity.

The reputation for being an interesting speaker materially aids one in securing a hearing. A prevalent expectation of eccentricity will assist when for the first time a speaker appears in a community unacquainted with him. It will be comparatively useless afterward, unless connected with "high moral and intellectual endowments."

Ephemeral fame.

Persistent singularities may draw a crowd in a city where strangers congregate, or attract one to hear a political speaker, or fill a great room with "lewd fellows of the baser sort." But such things make people attend merely to the man and his performance.

Well-founded fame for ability of any kind, for wisdom, for influence, for bringing things to pass, and, above all, for honesty, makes men wish to hear every word such a one says. It is immeasurably easier to obtain fame by honest work than to transmute notoriety into fame or to prevent notoriety from becoming infamy.

Brilliant veneer over green stock.

The chief of beguiling ideas to which the extemporizer is exposed, and which is always the source of many others, is the complacent confidence, sure to be engendered by early success in this method, that he can talk acceptably at any time, upon any occasion and theme, even without preparation. He reaches this conclusion because, when necessity or indolence had led him to neglect preparation, he has, in popular estimate, sometimes attained a greater triumph of oratory than on other occasions when carefully prepared. He is prone to catch at two or three ideas, or hastily glance at notes made long before, and without even an hour's preliminary reflection ascend the pulpit, rise before a jury, or confront an audience gathered to hear him lecture.

Applying the asp to themselves.

Extempore speaking is brought into contempt by ministers who spend their time in small talk in bookstores, shops, at dinner tables and teas, strangers to the study till Saturday evening, perhaps until Sunday morning. The style of such men deteriorates with the decline of animal spirits and the increase of the habit of neglect. They reach the dreaded "dead line" before they are aware, and resort to degrading expedients to regain popularity.

A large proportion of promising young lawyers, supposed for a few years after having received their parchments to be worthy successors of the

men who are closing illustrious careers, descend by this road to oblivion. At first they prepare their cases and make a new presentation each time they appear before a jury. But after a few sessions the same figures of speech and methods of appeal reappear so often that the judges and court officers exhibit an indifference which infects the jury, so that those to whom the strains of eloquence are new are unmoved, and the strains themselves are but echoes of the original melody.

"Little foxes spoil the vines."

Many a senator who had been eminent at the bar has sought at the expiration of his term to regain his practice, but found it difficult to do so in some instances because his partners and the students in his office had absorbed it during his absence, but in more because, sated with honor and forgetting that continual practice and thorough preparation are necessary to sustain the ability to influence a jury, he has become hesitating or wandering. When such a man, who had been astonishingly eloquent in the Senate, reached the age of sixty it was said of him, "As an advocate he is just what he was when he began, 'a promising young lawyer.'"

The extemporizer is liable to extravagance to the verge of falsehood, and in this respect resembles the poet, since the essential elements of poetry are intensity of emotion and vividness of perception. BISMARCK somewhat cynically said, "To be a good

speaker one must have the gift of improvisation, and being something of a poet, he cannot adhere mathematically to the truth." Extravagance in poetry being expected, does little harm, provided the thread of gold running through it is not obscured.

Losing the vantage ground of truth.

The sacred writings of all religions abound in figures of speech which, taken literally, have deceived the unwary reader. But when the extemporaneous speaker, heated by his own rhetoric, his perspective reduced to one idea, yields himself without restraint, he may make assertions which are false, and become responsible for declarations which, when proof is demanded, he honestly denies having made; they seem to him so different from anything which he would attempt to defend. Some of the most frightful falsehoods which ever fell from human lips have been uttered under the solemn sanction of the ministry by those who would have trembled had they foreseen what they would say. Men have been guilty of such extravagance and falsehood in public that in private their representations concerning business transactions or the character and conduct of their fellowmen were deemed unworthy of credit.

This danger waits at the lips of every careless speaker, but upon the subject of religion it is so easy for one to exaggerate that men, without intending to deceive, may profess an experience

far transcending any which they have attained. Such is the not uncommon error of those noted for gifts in prayer and testimony. Many of these are bulwarks of piety and morality; but in other instances rigid examination elicits facts which agree more closely with their general reputations than with an estimate based upon what they say in public. This tendency is displayed in orators who abound in adjectives and adverbs; and in all cases the more brilliant the orator and the less his preparation the greater his danger.

"The ruling passion."

It became necessary for the bishop to rebuke, in the presence of the association to which he belonged, a young minister addicted to this vice. The accused admitted his guilt, and exclaimed that he would not wish his brethren to suppose he did not regret this fault. He felt it as keenly as anyone could; so keenly that it had already caused him to shed "barrels of tears." The late Bishop BAKER, one of the most exact and cautious of men, informed me that he knew this minister, and that after the rebuke he so reformed as to become useful and highly respected.

Lord CHATHAM, though in constant practice, said that he did not dare to speak extemporaneously with a state secret lurking in his mind, "for in the sibylline frenzy of his oratory he knew not what he said." *

* Matthews, *Orators and Oratory*, p. 109.

Every political campaign is embarrassed by speakers who indulge in such extravagance as to ruin the effect of what would otherwise be great orations, and so furnish ammunition to their opponents.

An extemporizer is strongly tempted to the use of slang, especially when addressing audiences the majority of which consist of the uncultivated. Numerous definitions of slang have been given. RICHARD GRANT WHITE has composed perhaps the best: "Slang is a vocabulary of genuine words or unmeaning jargon, used always with an arbitrary and conventional significance, and generally with humorous intent. It is mostly coarse, low, and foolish, although in some cases, owing to circumstances of the time, it is pungent and pregnant of meaning." *

In the modification of language many words and phrases that arose as slang are adopted by good writers and cease to be slang. But until they have so ceased, which seldom takes place in the same generation in which the expression arises, he who uses them when a cultivated style is reasonably to be expected lowers himself in the estimation of an important proportion of his hearers.

The downward grade.

That a slang expression is never to be used by any professional speaker I would not maintain.

* *Words*, chapter 5, p. 85.

Who will severely criticise a lawyer before a jury, nine out of ten of whom live and have their being in an atmosphere of slang, if he uses the methods of speech with which they are most familiar? Who will condemn without reserve a professional politician on the stump who knows that at a well-turned paragraph beyond their comprehension as a matter of reasoning, but which ends with a slang expression, the crowd will applaud if to catch their votes he seasons his speech to their palate?

This, however, is a dangerous liberty to allow one's self.

Undermines a fine structure.

A speaker should consider the effect of the use of slang upon his own mental processes, as well as inquire whether it aids him to convince or persuade those whom he hopes to please by it. As respects himself, unless it be the exact expression of his thought, it is an inaccuracy. If he adopts it in preference to a better phrase because of his familiarity with it, it is a hindrance to improvement, promotes mental indolence, and steadily depraves diction.

He who uses slang in private will inevitably do so in public unless, when such a word occurs to him, he extemporaneously translates it into other forms of speech. This, though difficult, is not impossible, and may impart a piquancy which has the advantages of slang with none of its disadvantages.

But the shadow of attention.

A diversion of attention not from the speaker, but from the subject, results from the instantaneous perception that a slang expression is being used. It is this which tempts the speaker to utter it. He may have been as dry as dust, but if he says he "is not in it," or "there are others," or "I will see you later," an average audience will smile, and a sensation may be produced, but he who mistakes this for attention to the theme is but as a child with a rattle.

It has been observed that public speakers on serious subjects who frequently sink to slang wield only an evanescent influence. The minister of the Gospel who introduces it into religious worship is not worthy of respect, unless he be ignorant, in which case the regard shown him must be mingled with pity. A clergyman, graduated from two of the best institutions in America, preaching what should have been a solemn appeal, exclaimed, "If a man expects to get to heaven without self-denial, I tell you he will get left every time." The congregation laughed, and, though they caught the thought, reverence forsook them. Another employed slang learned in his youth and unfamiliar to the generation to whom he delivered it. Speaking of the flight of ELIJAH, he referred to God as saying, "What, ELIJAH, thou my most trusted servant, who dost never fear the face of mortal when

obedient to my command, what, thou, ELIJAH, take leg bail!"

Yet another, preaching in a union service on Thanksgiving Day, spoke of the fortunes that faded away so suddenly on "Black Friday," and thus closed what would have been an impressive paragraph: "Where have these fortunes gone? They came up like JONAH's gourd. I repeat it, my brethren, as we sit here in the house of God, where are they gone? They are gone! gone! gone where the woodbine twineth!" The spirit of the assembly was transformed from devotion to the feeling excited at a circus when the clown is in his most ludicrous mood.

Hackneyed expressions of no strength.

Allied to the use of slang is the adoption of frequently occurring phrases, such as "along these lines," which have been repeated to the weariness even of the uneducated by the clergy, political speakers, and professors. The moment a phrase has become common it should not be used, and when it is necessary to communicate the idea originally included therein the thought should be particularly well expressed. For such phrases are not always the result of discrimination in terms; and when they are wisely selected like so-called synonyms they apply to but a few statements, yet being consciously or unconsciously taken up by others, they become so vague as to perplex or mislead.

Indolent men of natural or acquired fluency are tempted to a species of plagiarism. They use outlines of addresses made by others; avail themselves of books of skeletons; listen to speakers of repute and appropriate their illustrations. Some, after reading a book, or even glancing at it, just before mounting pulpit or rostrum, will deliver the ideas in language of their own. A clergyman addicted to this method was detected by a conspiracy between his bookseller and a parishioner; the former notified the latter of the pastor's purchases. Usually the filcher, though able to say truthfully that he speaks extemporaneously, is convicted of obtaining his materials in this way.

Saul's armor.

The preacher from other men's skeletons is like a swimmer upbuoyed by bladders, at the mercy of a pin's point. The effect of such practices is to destroy creative power, stunt mental growth, and choke the springs of genuine emotion.

When an advocate's partner prepares a brief for his use it usually consists of a summary of the facts which the assistant has elicited in the examination, and of principles and precedents on which a favorable decision is sought; the pleader is supposed to be familiar with them and to have prepared specially, or acquired a readiness by former study, to argue them—a situation differing wholly from that of one who knew nothing

of the subject until he read the book whose utterance he dilutes.

One may properly read and listen, treat subjects that others have discussed, use facts of history, science, and literature, printed or uttered in his presence;—otherwise the first user of such facts would place an embargo upon their further application to the instruction or entertainment of mankind. But while premeditating an address he should digest the theme, invent his plan, and finally evolve his oration without one thought of another's page or phrase.

Mental brake needed.

The extemporizer is constantly tempted to length of discourse, and equally so whether he fails or succeeds. Should he begin hesitatingly, for a while apparently failing, he is loth to conclude, and is drawn onward, sending out feelers in the hope that he will touch some chord which will move the people and enable him to forget himself in the delight of free expression. If he meets with success and becomes unconscious of his surroundings, "thoughts that breathe and words that burn" come to his lips, and he continues until weariness or failure of voice recalls him to a sense of the flight of time.

A minister who usually read one of his two sermons and extemporized the other was seized with illness early one Sabbath morning. Fearing that he would be unable to preach, he sent for a

substitute, but failing to secure one, and feeling slightly better, he struggled to the church. He requested one of the deacons to pray and the hymns were sung. At eleven o'clock he rose, intending to explain that he could not preach, and to dismiss the congregation. Leaning upon the desk, he began, "My dear brethren, I had hoped to preach to you this morning upon the theme which has absorbed my meditations during the past week, and if I had the strength to do so, I would have tried to set before you—." After presenting an outline of his ideas he proceeded: "And then, if I could have come to the church in the evening, I designed to expound that beautiful passage in the first chapter of the Book of Revelation," and so continued the story of what he would have done. Finally a bell rang so loud as to attract his attention, and the deacon who had prayed rose and said, "Doctor, that is the one-o'clock bell calling the Catholic children to their school!" He had given them both sermons at greater length than he would have done had he been well.

A pulpit reverie.

Confined to a manuscript, unless he has been so unwise as to write too much, one cannot unduly continue;—although, from lack of common sense, some of the longest and most stupid discourses ever heard were read by men who fancied that even under such limitations they could not weary their auditors.

Tempted by the operation of a law that turns energy more and more into the channel to which it is directed by the will, the extemporizer is in danger of expending too much nerve force.

Profuse expenditure of vitality.

The work of a clergyman required to preach extemporaneously twice on the Sabbath makes heavy drafts. One who did so for twenty years was in the habit of weighing himself on Saturday afternoon and on Monday morning, and found a loss averaging two and a half pounds, which was not made up until Tuesday or Wednesday. He accounted for this by the diminution of his appetite and increase of the activity of the eliminating organs, as a result of continued excitement.

Necessary to recuperate.

A renowned preacher was in the habit of saying that no orator can attain great success with two different addresses or sermons on the same day, unless he is unnaturally excited or spends several hours in repose, and if possible in sleep, between the two efforts. Yet on the Sabbath the requirements of modern church life make demands upon the minister's attention to much which heavily taxes him. He must meet those who desire to speak with him at the close of the service, attend to the announcements, address the Sabbath school, perhaps confer with the officials of the church, and not rarely must visit the sick or bury the dead. Unless, therefore, he secures rest, attends strictly to diet, and in particular ob-

tains an opportunity for an hour of private meditation immediately preceding the second service, he will be dull or make drafts upon his reserve force that will leave him exhausted or sleepless. It is different with the professional evangelist, who has but a small number of sermons, and with the lawyer, who does not usually speak at length in more than one case on the same day, unless it be before a court of appeal, where deliberate statement and argumentation rather than a powerful forensic effort are required.

Nevertheless, when extemporization is performed without conscious strain, and due precautions are taken, the effects through a course of years are less debilitating than any form of speech which requires a constant effort of the will; and there are compensations in the healthfulness of the practice as a physical exercise.

"Breeds contempt."

Undue familiarity with the audience or with individuals therein is, to some speakers, a constant besetment. When an orator casts away the dignity which accrues to him from the occasion, the privilege, the honor, or the prerogative of speaking; when he renounces that moderate reserve which is a condition of reverence from all who are personally strangers to him, he runs the risk of impairing at once their power of concentrating attention upon his thought and his ability to infuse them with his own emotions. When he

exchanges glances or makes allusion, friendly or otherwise, to those present the audience may resolve itself into individuals and his lost mastery may be hard to regain.

A helpful interruption may be received with courtesy; a question, if pertinent, may be answered or postponed to a later period; a hostile interruption may be suppressed by a rebuke or contemptuously or prudently ignored; but except in after-dinner relaxation among friends, or reunions where former students meet in the hope of duplicating the unreserved intercourse of happy days long gone, and similar informal assemblies, the extemporizer should remember that the reciprocal influence of speaker and hearers tends in both to familiarity, and that it is liable to increase until it makes the orator's highest success impossible.

Overworking natural gifts.

The extemporizer is tempted by the love of ease and complacency to overwork his natural gift. In one that gift may be pathos. Two sorts of public speakers are exposed to such allurement, ministers and criminal lawyers. Religion deals much with the calamities, sorrows, and dangers of life. Few are without sad remembrances, present anxieties, and depressing apprehensions; all know that they must die, many have been bereaved, many anticipate bereavement, and a large proportion are concerned about their health. The minister's audience includes aged men, whose mental and physical fibers

are relaxing; women, and children, a much larger proportion of these than of men in the prime of life. Quick is the response to references to present misery, past sorrows, or future contingencies. Emotion tends to become epidemic, and the pathetic appeals of a minister of deeply sympathetic nature will not be coldly met. There is a luxury in tears, and congregations, like spectators in a theater, are not always saddest when they weep. The temptation is powerful to cover meagerness of preparation or poverty of thought by the narration of a pathetic incident. But nothing is more enervating than the habit of yielding to it. A "weeping prophet" who does little else may know brief popularity; then he will pass into the doleful condition of becoming the only one who weeps when he preaches. He will be spoken of as a good man. "He must be good or he could not weep so;" but whatever may be the temporary resurrection of pathetic power during his farewell sermon, his departure from the parish will not be a lasting cause of tears.

Lachrymose.

Another has no pathos; he argues, always and in all places. As a clergyman, if he has a highly intellectual congregation, who desire clear perceptions of truth and are interested in logical processes, and if his moral character be consistent with his profession, he will exert a potent influence; but he is in danger of overworking his gift

Flinty.

and losing his power over his hearers, especially over youth. A few such, not exhausting their sensibilities, live to a good old age and retain pastorates, in such communions as allow of a settled ministry, until their congregations have diminished to a handful, the expenses of the society being borne by a few individuals of wealth, between whom and the minister personal friendship has long existed.

Bubble blowers.

Some are confined in all their mental operations to the realm of fancy, knowing nothing of genuine feeling, and an argument they never make. One of these being asked on what subject he had preached the preceding day, answered, "My text was, 'O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself,' and my theme, man under all circumstances his own destroyer."

"That is a pretty difficult position to maintain in view of the law of heredity; did you attempt to treat it logically?"

"O no. I assumed it, and treated it rhetorically."

Some ministers have a practical vein, and will reduce the sublimest thoughts and the most spiritual emotions to the question, "Will it pay?" and never make an appeal not based on self-interest; they invariably become tiresome.

The pathetic should cultivate robust intellectual strength and force of utterance. The reasoner

should ask himself whether anyone was ever yet made a genuine Christian or radically changed in his natural tendencies by dint of mere argument. He who naturally soars upon the wings of his imagination should learn the distinction between faith and fancy, and the practical man subordinate his way of looking at things to the "manifestation of the truth to every man's conscience in the sight of God."

Self-knowledge the road to recovery.

The advantages of such self-examination and its consequences are not merely in the interest of accomplishing the work committed to a minister, but equally valuable in the direction of self-development. The argument of the usually pathetic preacher will give special pleasure to a large class. The pathos of the argumentative, if genuine, will produce permanent effects. Persons of sound understanding will be willing to follow the adventurous rhetorical balloonist if they are sure that he has ballast; and the practical preacher who is also pathetic and imaginative will draw within the sphere of his natural way of viewing subjects many who, until their hearts and imaginations had been attracted toward the preacher and his great object, would not ask whether "it will pay."

Criminal lawyers who depend entirely upon pathos provoke ridicule as they grow older. At intervals I heard an advocate who once could make the most stony-hearted and experienced

judge shed tears; but after he had often wept in behalf of the most notorious scoundrels, and used the same pathetic references and tones, the members of the bar, recognizing the approach of the time when he intended to pull out the tremolo, would exchange glances and taking their handkerchiefs divert the attention of the jury, and the judge would tilt his chair as if about to listen to a familiar tune that carried him back to his childhood days.

Special reason for care.

The composer of discourses to be read or recited can more readily detect the excess of a tendency in himself than can the extemporizer. Hence the necessity of positive cautions. Few instances can be adduced of an orator's maintaining his position after middle life who exclusively worked his natural gift, or who practiced upon an extreme that made his successive public efforts resemble another yard of tapestry of the same general figure.

This danger is not confined to orators, since premature failure of poets, painters, and composers of music has illustrated the operation of the same laws.

CHAPTER XXXVII

Defects and Difficulties

Eccentricities of gesture are unimportant when speaker and audience are swayed by emotion, for the critical faculty is then inert; but at other times they are impediments to the orator, and their effects are greater than those of peculiarities of dress; for the latter are surveyed at a glance and, remaining unchanged, the eye no longer takes cognizance of them. But strange gestures, whether the frequent recurrence of one or the introduction of several, fascinate the eye and give it undue ascendency over the mental operations.

Unconsciously formed.

Gesticulatory grooves are usually formed in the beginning of a career; frequently they are caused by embarrassment, but oftener are sequences of unregulated energy. Occasionally they reveal the unconscious influence of previous pursuits. A journeyman tailor who became a minister of the argumentative type, when drawing toward a conclusion, invariably placed the thumb and finger of his left hand in juxtaposition, as though they held a needle, and the corresponding members of his right hand in position as though they held a thread; as the argument rapidly progressed, his hands were raised nearly to his eyes, and every

motion involved in threading a needle was unconsciously made, till the final word was uttered in a stentorian voice, when the invisible thread was swiftly drawn out to the extent of a yard.

A public speaker who had met with an accident, whereby his face was injured, was compelled to speak for some months with the wounded portion covered by a plaster. At intervals he would touch his face to ascertain whether the plaster was in place. For ten years after he had entirely recovered he involuntarily made that movement.

Uprooting such practices.

To break up such habits is difficult. The candid friend, from whom the poet prayed to be saved, is invaluable, and criticism should be kindly received. An ordinary speaker was transformed into a genuine orator by the remark of a friend, who told him that in referring to the heart he always placed his hand over the liver.

Grotesque movements are tolerable while speakers are young, but are unendurable at a later period. I knew an English orator who had formed the habit of moistening his lips at the end of paragraphs. By the time he was fifty years of age he always did this at the end of sentences, and when I last heard him he did it several times in a sentence of ordinary length.

Every habit, however disagreeable, can be eradicated. One orator offered a prize to some young people for each occasion in which they

noticed him detaining his outstretched arms in such a position as to form a capital T; some months of prize-paying conquered the tendency.

The liability to such defects is greater in extemporizers than in readers or reciters. The repetition of significant gestures, even though a peculiarity of the individual, is not objectionable. It is the recurrence of meaningless contortions and grimaces, or their sporadic appearance, which is to be avoided.

Gross blemishes.

Sometimes, through haste, speakers shorten passages of great natural dignity and even of sublimity. An otherwise striking discourse was degraded by the sentence, "When the world and its systems of philosophy stand mute by the side of the open grave, Jesus says, '*I'M* the resurrection and the life.'" And of God was said, "*He's* going to work out his own plans." Often the language of the kitchen or the nursery is allowed to intrude upon the most exalted occasion. A speaker not incapable of pathos and poetical forms of expression referred to the infant Jesus as "the holy baby." Such lapses reveal gross carelessness, coarseness of fiber, or lack of early cultivation.

Inflexibility of manner.

Many extemporizers have but one style of delivery. Their tones are the same whether they deliver a business statement, a presentation speech, a congratulatory address at a golden wedding, a

witty after-dinner response, a patriotic oration, or a funeral sermon. In some instances the tones contradict the sense of their language. This is a common fault of clergymen, and results from having a fixed ideal of pulpit oratory, which in their earlier efforts they strove to attain. It occurs more frequently among those who try to reproduce discourses, or to adapt that prepared for one occasion to another unlike it. Such men may be natural and vivacious in conversation, but when speaking in public they drawl, chatter, chant, or eject their words as from a catapult. They have but themselves to blame for the neglect which, soon or late, they must experience. A complacency which prevents them from self-criticism, or a pride which leads them to spurn the corrective hints of others, obstructs their perceptions; or indolence leads them to endure what might easily be cured were they to reflect upon the delivery suitable to each occasion, seek systematically to attain it, and after each effort unsparingly analyze their language and delivery.

A disparaging contrast.

Speakers should habitually seek to extemporize addresses for special occasions, as to style as well as matter, asking themselves the elementary question how, under a reversal of circumstances, they would desire to be addressed. There are few radically different occasions, the jubilant, the melancholy, the jovial, the solemn, the de-

pressing, the helpful, the dignified, and the light. Colorings may be infinite, and while absolute concord is necessary to the highest success, if the generic distinction be regarded, a slight departure will not be noticeable. BULWER has written delightfully of monotony in occupation as a source of pleasure; but monotony of delivery, in one or many discourses, can give no pleasure to the hearer except as it enables him to pay tribute to HYPNUS. A musician was requested to listen to a composition, and the composer complained that the critic slept during the rendering of his piece, to which the censor replied, "Of music sleep is itself an opinion."

An essay which suits the occasion may be delivered in a manner which would make it more inappropriate than incoherent or irrelevant remarks uttered with suitable tones and gestures.

Lack of Ideas.

Poverty of thought is a defect frequently alleged against the extemporizer by those who prefer other methods. I have been at great pains to hear extemporaneous speakers at the bar, on political platforms, in debates, and in the pulpits of all denominations—not excepting the Mormon, in whose tabernacle I heard one of the best extemporaneous sermons, delivered by ORSON PRATT, and of which I did not believe a word—and I am compelled to acknowledge that many speakers are amenable to this charge.

Too heavily freighted.

There are a few extemporizers who err at the opposite extreme and overload their subjects with thought to such an extent as to suppress emotion and make animation impossible. The best extemporizers are not exposed to the charge of having too little thought, but they pay a large price for their power; for only by much thinking and constant reading, and usually by a vast amount of writing, can the ability be acquired and maintained to make a forceful, thoughtful extemporaneous address. To them preparation has become a second nature, and it begins with the moment an engagement is made and a theme chosen, whether hours, days, months, or years in advance of the time.

"Great cry, little wool."

The style of the extemporizer whose productions are defective in thought is marked by verbosity, and usually by an excess of anecdote and illustration. Two illustrations of the same idea are rarely needed if either is adapted to illuminate the theme. Since thoughts are acquired by experience, observation, and reading, and are modified, bounded, and estimated by reflection, to assume that they can be classified and clarified without it is to act upon the theory that effects can exist without causes. But a special mode of thought, which is aided by writing, is necessary for the perfection of the power of packing a discourse with ideas. The habit must be formed of re-

ducing ideas to their original elements. The wheat must be threshed from the straw and stored in the granary. After years of practice in this art, when obliged to speak upon a subject without special preparation, one may, under the stimulus of an expectant and responsive audience, think upon his feet with much more rapidity than is possible when alone and with equal accuracy.

Not genuine inspiration.

The supposed inspirations that come to the orator consist of rapid combinations of ideas pre-existing in the mind, usually accompanied by sufficient emotion as to lead a speaker, unaccustomed to analyze his own processes, to fancy that he has said something wholly new and to depend upon such inspiration. A verbatim report would often mortify the "inspired" orator, for what seemed to him and to the audience *new* might prove to be like the unsubstantial fabric of a dream.

Laziness mistaken for faith.

A young licentiate applied for admission to the Christian ministry and was asked what method he adopted in the preparation of discourses. He answered that he never made preparation, but depended upon God to suggest the text as the time of preaching drew near. In response to a question he frankly replied that he was not in the habit of studying the Bible, preferring to rely wholly upon the original source of divine illumination. The candidate was then asked whether, during the two years that he had essayed to preach,

God had suggested any text to him which he did not already know by heart. After thinking a moment he replied that he could not recall an instance where he had not known the words of the text. "Then," said the examiner, "do you not see that you restrict God in the use of his own word? Let me advise you either to commit the entire Bible to memory or change your method."

Observing, thinking, and reading are as essential to thought as are combustibles to the production of fire, and he who will not think, read, and observe will become a mere babbler, even though he relies upon the Omniscient for help.

Work the only cure.

Inaccuracy of thought is caused by mental feebleness or indolence, usually the latter, and is incurable without work. In all denominations are scores of preachers who would starve were they in another vocation and pursued it as languidly as they discharge the duties of the ministry.

The extemporizer, before beginning to speak, should reflect upon the probable evolution of his ideas the number of minutes he can spend upon each successive part of his oration. Under no circumstances when speaking should he consult his watch. While he may find it necessary to have a sense of time, the audience should be destitute of it, and no act is more automatically imitated than taking out a watch. The only method of paying

proper regard to proportion is to be ready, like the fabled goddess, to swallow one's own children if too many are born.

Doubling on one's track.

Excess of repetition in the same discourse or in successive discourses is a serious evil, and sufficient to account for the lack of success which attends many who are nobly endowed in voice and figure and not destitute of a rich and expressive vocabulary. To enchain attention something must be uttered which requires progression of thought.

Foundation building.

As the clergyman, compelled to speak on similar subjects at set times, is in much danger of repetition, it is essential to protect himself by a system, and the best for the young minister is this: He should prepare with utmost thoroughness a sermon upon some principle of natural or revealed religion, or upon a doctrine or ceremony of the denomination which he represents, or upon some fundamental principle of universal morality; comprehend and define the theme and select the best scriptural proofs, committing them to memory; also the substance of the definition. He should converse in private with unbelievers and doubters and use the proofs he has prepared, afterward delivering his sermon as well as he can. A sermon of this kind should require at least two weeks of careful study, and it should be the young minister's practice for several years to produce such a one as often as once a month. This will consti-

tute a foundation upon which a countless variety of discourses will build themselves.

To avoid repetition is easy if the subject be thoroughly thought through and properly linked; and it is also a valuable aid to think the chain through backward. Knowing that he intends to close with a certain thought, he should interrogate his reason rather than his memory concerning the path by which he expected to reach it. And having thought the entire discourse through, as to its root ideas, backward and forward, he should then ask himself concerning every separate part, without special heed to the language in which he answers his own mental questions. An incredible amount of pains may have been taken in mastering the subject, but to deliver it he should simply mentally perceive the ideas in all possible relations and advance upon the highway of thought with a steady step. He will not repeat if he has in this manner perfected his conceptions.

Value of records.

To avoid repetitions speakers, immediately after any address, should refer to the brief and note what points were omitted which they had intended to make and what had been spontaneously added.

Every minister will find it useful to keep a double index of his subjects—one in which the text appears first and the topic second, and the other with the topic indexed first. By consulting his memoranda he can exclude from his new prep-

aration what he has previously said. As with ministers, so with lawyers. Many elementary principles must be frequently set forth, but the subjects to which they apply are so numerous and vast that a person with an active mind, before mental failure has begun from infirmity or age, will produce something fresh to himself and therefore to his hearers.

Paucity of language is a common defect of extemporaneous speech. A person may utter a continuous stream of words, but resemble a musician constantly playing the same or similar tunes or tunes with slight variation of notes. Instead of expressing the same thought in different forms of speech—a necessity in all oratory—he expresses different ideas in the use of language so similar that, though his fluency is remarkable, the distinction in thought is scarcely perceptible, and his listeners fancy that he is repeating himself.

Oft-recurring words and phrases.

The stenographic report of several speeches delivered by the same person will exhibit this defect in a mortifying manner when, in response to the requests of those who have heard them, the orator attempts to collect them for publication. It is then difficult for him to believe his vocabulary so meager, the forms of his sentences so similar, that so many phrases often recur, and that there seems to be an irresistible tendency to use the same words, even when others would express the

shade of meaning which he endeavors to communicate with greater accuracy than the familiar terms which go so trippingly over his lips.

This is the result of a natural law. Each time a word is repeated the tendency of that word to respond to the slightest mental demand is increased. It is for this reason that the habit of profane swearing, when acquired in youth, takes hold so firmly that many, without being aware of it, are guilty of it under slight excitement and often in familiar speech.

A Barmecide feast.

An inadequate supply of thought often contributes to the same result. The speaker must go on, but really has nothing to say, and so "he draweth out the thread of his verbosity finer than the staple of his argument." Some with a copious vocabulary and an agreeable style of speaking can do this so as to retain the attention of the audience. But others, having little to say, are compelled to utter words so familiar to themselves that they will respond to the slightest stimulus. If this is continued and no effort made to counteract it, it will be impossible to hold an audience.

Padding is still more destructive to the accomplishment of the orator's purpose. The recurrence of the copulative conjunction "and," except when the word is emphatic, as in "Ye cannot serve God *and* mammon," is an impediment to attention.

An address was reported which contained fifteen

passages of similar formation to this: "The elements of success in business are industry and temperance and economy and punctuality and affability and tact and honesty." Each *and* was extended to twice its natural length, changing the rhythm of the sentence, as well as making proper emphasis impossible. Pauses equaling the time wasted upon the *ands* would have been more impressive; for fluency maintained by meaningless words has no power. *The* is almost as much overworked. A stenographer who reports the addresses of many distinguished men declares that more than half the matter in the average sermon, political speech, or lawyer's plea is mere padding, and to keep the peace with his employers he often leaves out hundreds of such words and phrases as "*and*," "*still*," "*nevertheless*," "*now*," "*now then*," "*however*," "*notwithstanding*," "*furthermore*," "*my hearers*," "*beloved brethren*," "*friends and fellow-citizens*," "*gentlemen of the jury*," "*may it please the court*," "*bear with me while I remark*," "*permit me to say*," "*I do not hesitate to say*," "*I am ready to declare*," "*I am bound to maintain*," "*what I wish to show is*," "*this is a fact and nobody can deny it*," "*I do not mean this*," "*I do not mean the other*," "*I do not mean that*," "*what I mean is this*," "*also I mean*," "*in addition to this I mean*," "*I feel*," "*it is borne in upon me*," "*first of all*." The frequent

Positive handicapping.

use of first, second, third, "*now, lastly, under this head,*" "*one word more and I have done,*" simply remand the speaker, in the estimate of most persons under threescore and ten years, to the period of the "sere and yellow leaf." The egotist hangs lovingly over his own personality. A cultivated man introducing a senator of the United States, thus began, "*I, myself, personally.*"

The most absurd instance of padding is the expression "*in other words,*" which implies a criticism of the speaker or of the hearers; either he has stupidly expressed himself or they are too dull to understand him. If it is necessary to repeat ideas, it is folly to inform the hearer that it is being done.

An oft-needed criticism.

Dr. J. W. ALEXANDER, a superior extemporizer himself, points out a defect which he charges against almost all extemporaneous preachers. "They talk about the way in which they are preaching; 'after a few preliminary remarks I shall proceed to,' and so forth. Or, 'what I lay down shall take the form of general principles.' 'I come with hesitation,' and so forth. 'I shall be more brief on this point.' 'You will observe that in this discussion I do so and so.'" * This criticism is well founded, but Dr. ALEXANDER does not explain the cause of the mannerism. Where it is not an imitation or an exhibition of vanity, it is but an

* *Thoughts on Preaching*, p. 25.

attempt to maintain fluency. While the speaker was saying these things it would have been wiser for him to pause; for they are among the most useless forms of padding. Some have made this discovery late in life to the revivifying of their eloquence and the prolongation of their acceptability.

Better renounce than abuse the art

It is better far to write and read sermons, lectures, or addresses, or to deliver them from memory, than to speak extemporaneously with a preparation so inadequate, a comprehension of the theme so imperfect, a vocabulary so limited, or a pace of mind so slow as to need such filling as this. To simply maintain the oratorical pose and mien and place a suitable stress upon a word when uttered was one of the chief elements of JOHN BRIGHT'S tremendous power. He was a slow speaker, but every word was a new and symmetrical stone in the intellectual edifice which he was building. His hearers waited for his words and hung upon them.

The bane of babbling prayers.

Worse than this is the unintentional profanity with which extemporaneous prayers are often interlarded. It is not the fervent prayer of the unconscious suppliant whose soul is absorbed which deserves this criticism, but the cold, formal prayer in the early stages of a meeting, or when men without the prayerful spirit are goaded by pastors to perfunctory performance of duty. It is when ministers pray without a fervent spirit that this

profanity most frequently appears. They then utter the names of the Deity while thinking of something else to say.

The borderland of profanity.

An infallible test of such a situation is this: When in extemporaneous prayer one addresses the Deity at intervals, if his mind is concentrated upon those awful or gracious names and not upon some idea that he is reaching after, and if his heart is moved by awe, confidence, or penitence, the emphasis upon the name will be natural and proper. If he addresses God as a being of infinite power, or if a sense of His holiness is that which causes him to utter the holy name. God, reverence for infinite perfection must affect his tone. If imploring pardon he utters the name of the Father of Mercies or of his Son Jesus Christ, tenderness will soften solemnity. But if he pronounces the divine names or attributes of the Deity as though his subconscious intention were similar to that of a novice in a debate, who, in order to fill the time, cries, "Mr. President," at the beginning and end of every sentence, it is certain that those words do not spring from his heart, and that he is taking the name of God in vain.

Long prayers, the hypnotic of prayer meetings and of many public services on the Sabbath, would be done away with if only those holy names were employed which would be likely to rise to the lips of a suppliant were he in God's visible presence.

In the solemn prayer at the dedication of the temple of Solomon, the reading of which with proper emphasis requires ten minutes, there are in direct address but five repetitions of the name of the Creator. "And one of his disciples said unto him, Lord, teach us to pray." The sublime response contains but one utterance of the name of the Deity.

All ministers and members of Christian Churches are not deserving these strictures, but that many are will doubtless be conceded, even by some who unconsciously practice what they condemn. To avoid such defects it is not necessary to confine one's self wholly to liturgical forms, since anyone intellectually and morally qualified for the ministry may remedy them; and one who, when his attention is called to such faults, will not try to eradicate them would probably read written prayers irreverently.

An infallible remedy.

To remedy paucity of language requires only that a person should never utter a word which does not express his exact meaning. If this be deemed impossible, or prove practically so, and a word which does not satisfy a speaker escapes his lips, he should with calmness and clearness point out wherein that word fails, and substitute for it that which meets the requirement of the thought. This can be done without informing the assembly that he did not intend to use the word, or was

not satisfied with it when uttered. He must attain a control of himself and of his words which will admit of his doing this, precisely as he would if he saw that the audience did not understand him. Rarely, however, will this mistake be made by one whose unswerving intention is to mean what he says and to say what he means.

In preparation for an address in which the same idea must recur it is of advantage to reflect upon synonyms a few moments before speaking. Suppose that one desired to descant upon the mysteries of religion, he would not wish to repeat, "This, also, is a mystery," nor would there be any objection to his qualifying the word by some term adapted to detain the mind of the hearer. He might therefore meditate upon many words, such as inscrutable, unfathomable, impenetrable, incomprehensible. He would be conscious whether he had already used one of those, and thus by proper variety and emphasis could overcome the tendency of the mind of the listener to receive the oft-repeated word, mystery, without a mental response to the significance.

To the last.

The quest for new words should be ceaseless, and the more vigorously must the search be made as the period draws on in which the memory begins to fail. To imprint these indelibly the habit of writing should be maintained, and when the work is done the composer, dictionary in

hand, should reread, and, wherever possible, instead of repeating, substitute another word.

It is not infrequently the case that speakers who, in part by writing in preparation for their addresses, have attained remarkable skill in extemporizing, renounce the practice as they advance in years. It is quite possible that if they meditate deeply, and are in constant practice, no marked change in their style will immediately take place. But should the neglect of composition and self-criticism be prolonged, imperceptibly to themselves, but not to their hearers, they will become padders.

No cause for discouragement.

The enumeration of so many defects may tempt some to conclude that if the extemporizer's bark encounters so many shoals, sunken reefs, rock-bound coasts, icebergs, fogs, waterspouts, and cyclones, he would better depend upon some other mode of exporting his ideas. But this would be rash; for, as no man suffers from all disease—though there is none that some human being has not experienced—so no extemporizer has ever met all these difficulties.

Should the manuscript and memoriter methods be subjected to a similarly rigorous analysis, it would be seen that they are liable to difficulties and defects, and that they present temptations as obstructive to success as those connected with extempore speech;—and that they are without its compensating advantages.

CHAPTER XXXVIII

Protecting One's Self Against Failure

FREQUENT failure and infrequent success are not surprising in an extemporizer too feeble to digest his subject or intelligently to select a vocabulary, whose only inspiration is the audience and whose chief supports are a prodigious voice and stupendous conceit. But that the best extemporizers occasionally fail is a fact which keeps them constantly apprehensive, and some of the most celebrated have confessed that they knew no certain means of protecting themselves. Absolute certainty of success is indeed unattainable; but it may be constantly approached; and in every profession it is true that some measure of uncertainty is one of the most powerful incentives to action and development.

A search light necessary.

Under a target in a field where sharpshooters practiced was this inscription: "If you cannot find out why you miss, you will never learn to hit the bull's-eye."

The failure of one who generally succeeds results from something which is not operative on the occasions of his triumph. A discovery of such causes is the only means of theoretically determining how they may be prevented, and experiment

the only method of demonstrating theory and perfecting art.

Embarrassment is supposed to be a principal cause of failure, and many endeavoring to account for want of success will say, "I was strangely embarrassed from the beginning to the close." But why should a practiced speaker in usual vigor, expressing himself upon a theme with which he is familiar, be embarrassed? In this, as in other cases, is an effect to be antagonized by ascertaining and guarding against or counteracting its cause.

Outward causes of perturbation.

Something external may distract his attention, and through sight or hearing the impression of the source of disturbance may obscure the memorial perceptions which sustain his flow, and, suddenly recalled to self-consciousness, he is confused. William Pinckney was easily affected in this way, and once was unable to proceed until a noise at the door was suppressed. Webster, his opponent, grimly smiled, for he was not so sensitive as to be disturbed by that kind of interruption; although when he was addressing an audience at a poultry show a giant chanticleer flapped his wings and crowed so lustily that Webster was compelled to sit down. Dr. Durbin was much embarrassed if he perceived persons whispering while he was speaking.

Many look at the center of disturbance instead

of at a point as remote as the configuration of the building will allow. At a summer resort, in the height of the season, I witnessed an instance of dealing effectively with such a cause of annoyance. It was at an evening service, where there was a constant influx of late comers. The arrangements for seating them in the already well-filled house were peculiar. For the first few minutes after the sermon began all who came were seated on the left side of the house. During that time the orator looked to the far right, without glancing toward the newcomers; the stream of genuine oratory rolled on, and he held the attention of his audience. The ushers then seated the people on the right side, and the minister turned to the left. He did not seem in the least distracted.

The lights may go out. All then depends upon the self-possession of the speaker. Bishop Janes was preaching once when this occurred; he simply said, "The Gospel light shineth in dark places," and proceeded with his discourse, not losing the attention of the audience during the darkness or when candles were brought.

Encountering a hostile glance.

The arrival of a distinguished individual, with the resultant stir, or a hostile look should be similarly met. Almost every assembly contains those who fix their eyes upon a speaker with an expression which perturbs him. The most widely known

dissenting minister in London relates that, early in his ministry, a man of magnificent presence, sitting in a conspicuous place, fixed his eyes upon him with a gaze which seemed to say, "I have come to take your measure." The discourse was reduced to mediocrity. Subsequently he saw this person standing in the door of a shop and wearing a baker's cap, and learned that he was an ignorant and conceited man, who was proud of his good looks, and boasted that he always got the best seat wherever he went.

Take no risks at the outset.

Speakers in beginning should not look toward irresponsive countenances. When they become absorbed, and reach that peculiar state which is an essential element of commanding oratory, they may endure such a gaze, and find it a tonic. A timid speaker was so transformed that he thus turned his eyes full upon an unbeliever, whose contemptuous stare had terrified him, and thundered forth, "Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish: for I work a work in your days, a work which ye shall in nowise believe, though a man declare it unto you." The scoffer did not "remain to pray," but incontinently fled from the house.

Bashfulness not a virtue.

Diffidence, quite another thing from modesty, though often mistaken for it, is a frequent cause of embarrassment. There is no cure for this but "pushing one's self forward." This suggestion

is attributed to Lord Bacon, who, in his essay on "Nature in Man," adduces a similar general rule from high antiquity: "Neither is the ancient rule amiss, to bend nature as a wand to the contrary extreme, whereby to set it right; understanding it (the rule) where a contrary extreme is no vice."

This is hazardous unless one have taste to decide what is proper, nd tact to determine what is prudent.

As the bravest may turn pale at thought of danger, yet heroically stand to his guns and be a center of strength in a panic when many whose courage was merely physical retreat in dismay, so a man, conscious that he has something to say worth hearing, should by resolution and practice triumph over diffidence. An oft-recurring source of weakness is the consciousness that one is not doing what he intended. This, however, should not abash him; for he may be doing far better than he had intended and not be aware of it. He should remember that his audience are ignorant of what he meant to do, and cannot make the comparison which disturbs him. Temporary loss of connection or actual forgetfulness may dismay him, but this need not be an embarrassment. Every idea that the human mind can conceive may be reached from any other idea by a succession of regular steps without abrupt transitions.

Subjective instability.

All truth is interlocked, and by contrast truth and error may suggest each other.

Much can be learned by observing the mental processes of monomaniacs. One such became so enamored of the doctrine of infant baptism as to deliver scores of sermons upon it. A friend determined to break the spell, requested him to preach a sermon from the text "All flesh is grass." He consented, and thus opened his discourse:

Unconscious of his chains.

"The text, my brethren, asserts a solemn and an humbling fact concerning human nature. The law of mortality, which determines the duration of all existing natural forms, includes in its operation the body of man; and with respect to the liability to death, the short-lived and apparently worthless insect is on the same plane with the orator, the statesman, and the field marshal.

"But it is a peculiarity of the sacred Scriptures that they never utter a truth humbling to man that they do not couple with it another elevating him to a height but little lower than that of the angels. Hence this passage and a similar one in the New Testament are connected with the great truth, that 'he that doeth the will of God abideth forever.'

"But not all who pass away like the flower shall ascend to the glorious heights and joys of heaven; only those who have been regenerated. Regeneration is an inward grace, which hath its outward

sign. Baptism as respects its subjects consists of adult and infant baptism. Infant baptism, its nature and grounds, will furnish abundant material for reflection on this occasion."

He who has forgotten the connection may assert with dignity any truth, whether akin to or remote from his main theme, and, interpreting and explaining the words which he utters in the assertion, move calmly on, assured that in a short time, much sooner than if he stopped to think where he was, he will reach the missing link and satisfactorily proceed to uncoil the rest of the chain.

A stumbling-block.

The extemporizer who quotes much or often is liable to be obstructed. Henry Ward Beecher rarely quoted. He had no verbal memory, and could not recite a passage of Scripture correctly, and assigned to me as a reason for not making quotations that the attempt to do so stayed his mental processes, and was equivalent to a dash of cold water in his face.

Each quotation has its own rhythm, and if this be contrary to that of the speaker, he will be self-conscious while he quotes, and may find himself compelled, on beginning anew to extemporize, to re-experience the uncertainty which attended his introduction. Quotations should rarely be more than a sentence in length. Some hint should be thrown out as to the source, but the giving of

book, chapter, and page dampens the ardor of speaker and hearer. Certain orators read excerpts at points where they concluded the exposition of a thought; this admits of a natural resumption after the quotation is ended.

Youthful speakers, who commit easily and distrust themselves, abound in quotations, frequently from cyclopedias, and expose themselves to the charge of plagiarism by not pausing and changing the inflection when they pass from the created to the borrowed, and again when they resume improvisation.

Faded rhetorical flowers.

To attempt, without becoming reabsorbed and refreshing the mind, to speak a second time upon a theme previously treated with much freedom and rewarded by approbation is almost a certain forerunner of disaster. Especially is this the case if, as the time of delivery approaches or during it, the speaker refers to notes consisting only of heads or catchwords, expecting to be stirred by them in speaking. The nature of the process makes it impossible that such words should awaken thought. If the former effort consisted of the repetition of a memorized discourse, then such words or phrases would serve as prompters to the memory; but there is nothing but ideas left in the brain of an extemporaneous speaker. The special emotions, the rhythmical movement, and the words in their connections have all been dissipated, and such words

can suggest only what the mind would bring forth. In this unprepared condition, the effort to follow the former path with the consciousness of not doing so would rob the speaker of natural spontaneity; and, unless willing to re-think his subject and to re-heat his emotions, it would be better for him to take a new theme, or to treat the old one without any meditation in preparation, than to attempt to follow the old outline.

Words which suggest nothing.

One of the greatest of American theologians was in the habit of preparing his professorial lectures, and at the close of an active career which had made the institution famous his compensation was continued, with the expectation that he would revise his lectures for publication. But having written little of them, depending upon catchwords while speaking extemporaneously, on applying himself to the task of preparation for the press he found that those words did not recall the forms of speech in which they were clothed when delivered. So much of the matter was in a nebulous condition that he was unable to produce the desired volume.

For this reason, if requested to repeat an address, extemporaneous speakers seldom satisfy their friends, and, similarly, many clergymen on removing to a new parish fail to meet expectations. The course of thought which, when freshly conceived and fervently spoken, made a favorable im-

pression and spread the fame of the preacher, if said without being revivified is insipid.

Profuse expenditure of nerve force during the hours immediately preceding a public effort, occasioned by the mind automatically reviewing the subject, and the wild throbbing of pent-up oratoric impulses, defying all attempts toward diversion or repose, frequently leaves one exhausted.

At one of the Fourth of July celebrations maintained for many years by the late editor of the *Independent*, Mr. HENRY C. BOWEN, at Woodstock, Conn., the chairman of the meeting, while the second speech was being made received a card from an orator whose name was fourth upon the program. The card bore these words: "I must speak now or not at all." There was no time for explanation. The third speaker reluctantly consented to be the fourth. At the close the gentleman who had requested a change explained that he felt his force oozing away under the excitement of suspense, and knew that before another speech closed he would be in the depths of reactionary weakness. It would be better for such speakers to enter into an animated conversation upon another subject, or to pay no attention to those whom they are to follow. I know one who works out algebraic problems that he may leap fresh to his feet when his name is announced.

Ante-oration restlessness.

The dead sea.

Sometimes, instead of an exhausting reaction, a curious psychological phenomenon occurs. The mind enters a region of calm resembling that of the murderer who knows that he is to be hanged the next morning, yet who has a better night's sleep than he has had since his conviction. This is accounted for by the inability of the mind to think of anything new relating to the subject. It has gone round and round until from brain exhaustion it sinks into a stupor.

What shall a speaker do under such circumstances? This calmness is a species of mental rest, and he should regard his state with a kind of recklessness. Possibly the moment he opens his mouth the struggle for utterance will resemble a maelstrom, and he must condense the current into a stream of proper breadth and depth for an exordium. Perhaps he will not seem to himself to have anything to say. A pleasant reference may be made to the preceding speaker, to the audience, to the occasion, or to the theme, until he is slightly stirred, and the felt necessity of proceeding will re-establish the lost circuit.

One may learn to regard this calm as a precursor of self-possession, and to perceive the passage from it into normal interest as though watching the processes of another. Experience shows me that it is not like the calm of indifference, of paralysis, of sleep, nor of lassitude, but resembles a phe-

nomenon which sometimes occurs to commanders on the field of battle as the crisis approaches, to captains of vessels when informed that there are breakers ahead, or that the ship is sinking, and to any who receive intelligence which ordinarily would excite, but for the moment checks the mind.

Another variety of preliminary depression has a different origin. When, from excessive labor, anxiety, insomnia, fatiguing travel, domestic sorrow, or other weakening condition, the nervous system is overstrained one may have a morbid conviction that the hour has come for his public humiliation. It may become so vivid as to give him that dreadful sense of impending catastrophe which produces actual misery at the pit of the stomach, and this may continue for days before the speech is delivered. Yet when the hour comes the speech may be in the highest degree successful, all fear disappearing; but the strangest part of this experience is that he cannot insure himself against a recurrence of this state. Five times in a single winter a favorite speaker in the city of New York was compelled to contend against this premonition. Consulting a high medical authority, he was told that it indicated weakening of the nerve centers, and that he would do well to go abroad until he could contemplate an address with his accustomed calmness. The prescription was taken; the desired effects followed. As he had

Abnormal forebodings.

succeeded in each of the five addresses, the bearing of his experience upon preliminary waste of nerve power is that, determined not to fail under this morbid fear, he attempted to carry preparation beyond its normal bounds, and the result was prostrating reaction, which would have accelerated a crisis in his life had he not obeyed his physician's order.

Forcing the rate.

Artificial acceleration is a more common cause of failure than embarrassment. When he begins, no matter how slowly his mind works, a speaker should make no conscious effort. Were his address committed to memory, he could, if he thought it wise, increase the rate of speed and deliver, instead of sixty words, one hundred and twenty in the first minute. But when the mind produces of itself only sixty words a minute, to attempt to speak seventy plunges everything into confusion. His mind is moving at one speed, voice and gesture at another. Unable to apply the rules of elocution as the reader or memorizer might, he is arbitrarily increasing force and motion, and consequently failing to emphasize, accent, or inflect properly, destroying nerve power, and transforming the functions of his brain from a disciplined army into a mob. The rate will take care of itself if not forced, and be exactly what it should be. Sometimes accident saves from total failure those who force the rate. After beginning with

unnatural rapidity, and screaming in the first ten or fifteen minutes without rhyme or reason, having totally exhausted themselves, they drop to a low tone, and from that proceed just as they should have done from the beginning.

Attempting to realize preconceived ideal.

Analogous to this is the mistake of seeking to control the style. The condition of the speaker determines this; the circulation of his blood, his respiration, and the impulses from the nerve centers occupied in thought and in the selection of verbal signs. His style may be ornate and pompous—what is popularly called oratoric—or consist of a dignified flow of monologue, with a pervading conversational accent and inflection, or of epigrammatic sentences. If nature controls, he will never speak twice in exactly the same way; there may be a general similarity, but if that is too marked, it is reasonable to infer that he aims at a certain rhetorical form.

The speaker should recognize the fact that he may achieve success in any method. Suppose that his thoughts come in short sentences? Then the discourse will be brief, pronunciation distinct, and bearing natural. The impulses being one, not many, gestures will be totally different, and the words, also, will be unlike what they would be were the general movement more rhythmical and swelling. Whereas, if the speaker finds such condensed expression coming to his lips, and hurries

with a view of being what he thinks more eloquent, he will have neither the weight of the short utterances, the majesty of the more oratoric, nor the rippling of the conversational.

The true liberty of an orator comes as does the liberty of a pedestrian who starts at a moderate pace, and though for a few moments exertion seems to fatigue him, as he continues his muscles become flexible, his whole frame is involved in the movement, and with ease he walks for hours. Were he to begin a journey at the rate of four or five miles an hour and attempt to sustain that speed, the result would be disastrous. Liberty comes to the speaker, as to the writer who knows how feeble will be the product if he forces himself in advance of apprehension and comprehension.

Entering into liberty.

No one can foresee which of his efforts will give greatest satisfaction. Meanwhile he has the pleasure of conscious variety. Each experiment resembles the flying of a new kite, whose movements one watches with delight. Practice has given him the power to guide its motion and to protect it against sudden storms, but he does not interfere with it unless summoned by a powerful tug upon the string, when he instinctively responds with restraint or guidance.

The epigrammatic style is born of the intellect; the influence of the emotions is at its lowest

point; the colloquial has more of the personal element, while the "loud swelling" is more closely related to the imagination, through which the emotions are excited, but diffused rather than concentrated. The deepest emotion tends to isolated epigrammatic utterances, but they will be few, for there is no emotional speaking without rhythm, and there is little scope for rhythm in short sentences or heavily laden phrases. The only means of influencing style for a particular occasion is to reflect beforehand on what would be appropriate, and to become imbued with the conclusion reached. Then, should one through physical conditions develop an improper style, this may be fused or otherwise by the indirect action of the previous reflections, and thus to some extent modified with a minimum amount of internal conflict.

What is to be avoided is a conscious attempt to control style while speaking.

Mental nausea.

Occasionally a speaker is seized with a loathing of his whole train of thought. In an extreme case, if he possesses perfect confidence in himself, he may be justified in making an entire change; or he may use his original thought in a secondary aspect and with a condensed reference, thus retaining its appropriateness without being enslaved to an elaboration from which he recoils.

A difficulty more serious is when it is impossible

for him to remember anything that he meant to say, and when his mind seems a blank. Where disease or utter exhaustion is not at the base of this he can dissipate the difficulty by the utterance of truisms for a few moments; and often he will find a ready utterance, astonishing him by the facility with which the scattered thoughts return and the clearness with which they display themselves before the mental eye. If the case is desperate, he should be brief. The audience will simply think that for reasons unknown to them he did not design to speak at length.

Courage born of despair.

He must not allow any such change of tone or manner to reveal his embarrassment. This art can be acquired by practice, and a man with a mind as blank as the face of a granite rock may stand before an audience as inscrutable as the sphinx. It is impossible for him to be paralyzed after he has had a little experience.

All internal causes of failure diminish in frequency of recurrence and in strength under the influence of self-study, preparation, and practice. But there is no hope for one who fails without being aware of it;—an experience which there is reason to fear is not uncommon with many speakers, whatever their method.

CHAPTER XXXIX

Celebrated Extemporizers—The Old World

A DISCRIMINATING study of typical extemporizers, with a view to ascertaining how they perfected themselves in their art, should confirm or correct all preconceived theories.

Among the works on Eloquence and kindred subjects which have come down from antiquity that entitled *Institutes of Oratory; or, The Education of the Orator*, by MARCUS FABIUS QUINTILIANUS, is most widely known. Because of MACAULAY's characterization of it as superficial, I was for several years so prejudiced against this work as not to give it an attentive reading. Later, after "reading, marking, learning, and inwardly digesting" it, I came to the conclusion that he was a master of those principles which underlie all successful oratory, although his discussions are sometimes finical and pedantic, and his criticisms diminished in value by the unconscious influence exerted over him by the mass of rhetorical rules which had been accumulated before his day, and greatly added to during his protracted career. Quotations from him abound, but because he devoted the greater part of his work to inculcating the necessity of acquiring knowledge, writing discourses,

A standard for nineteen centuries.

and cultivating memory, the impression has obtained that he disparaged the art of the extemporizer.

Practice of ancient lawyers.

Yet he testifies that it was the custom of the celebrated lawyers of his time who had much general practice "to write only the most essential parts, and especially the commencements, of their speeches; to fix the other portions that they bring from home by meditation; and to meet any unforeseen attacks with extemporaneous replies. That CICERO adopted this method is evident from his own memoranda." *

The reader is cautioned that, "if by chance, while we are speaking, some glowing thought suggested on the instant should spring up in our minds, we must certainly not adhere too superstitiously to that which we have studied." QUINTILIAN affirms that in prepared speeches, "though it is of the first importance to bring with us from home a proper and precise array of language [in which he differs from what I aim to teach], it would be the greatest folly to reject the offerings of the moment."

After devoting much space to other methods he begins the seventh chapter of his tenth book in these words:

"But the richest fruit of all our study, and the most ample recompense for the extent of our

* Quintilian's *Institutes of Oratory*, translated by Watson, vol. ii, p. 307.

labor, is *the faculty of speaking extempore;* and he who has not succeeded in acquiring it will do well to renounce the occupations of the forum and devote his solitary talent of writing to some other employment; for it is scarcely consistent with the character of a man of honor to make a public profession of service to others which may fail in the most pressing emergencies, since it is of no more use than to point out a harbor to a vessel to which it cannot approach unless it be borne along by the gentlest breezes." *

The highest eulogy of this art.

The foregoing authorizes the classification of QUINTILIAN among extemporizers. As I shall quote from him with respect to other proficients in this art, I disregard the order of time, and place him first in the list of those selected from a large number.

The statesman orator.

PERICLES, the greatest of Greek statesmen, according to tradition was the greatest of orators. EUPOLIS, in his *Demi,* asked news of the great orators, whom he represented as ascending from the shades below, and when PERICLES appears cries out:

> "Head of the tribes that haunt those spacious realms,
> Does he ascend?"

He studied music with DAMON, who, however, probably taught him more of politics than of music. Under ANAXAGORAS he studied philosophy, purified

* Quintilian, vol. ii, p. 300.

and elevated his style, and was delivered from superstition. Of ZENO, a consummate dialectician, he learned much. He trained his imagination and improved his vocabulary until, on account of his eloquence, he is said to have gained a surname of OLYMPIUS. THUCYDIDES said of him, "When I throw him he says he was never down, and he persuades the very spectators to believe so."

Incidental evidence that Pericles extemporized.

QUINTILIAN says, "The solicitude of PERICLES was so great that when he had to speak in public he addressed a prayer to the gods that not a word might escape him disagreeable to the people." PLUTARCH represents him as praying that "not a word might unawares escape him unsuitable to the occasion." That PERICLES should have prayed that he might say nothing "disagreeable to the people" is foreign to his character, for he neither indulged nor courted the multitude. But either version agrees with the theory that he was an extemporizer.

None of his speeches has been preserved. That recorded by THUCYDIDES furnishes internal evidence of presenting the ideas of PERICLES in the language of THUCYDIDES. A note to PLUTARCH'S *Life of Pericles* quotes SUIDAS, who wrote many centuries after PLUTARCH, as saying that PERICLES "wrote down his orations before he pronounced them in public, and, indeed, was the first who did so." Professor BREDIF, in *Political Eloquence of Greece,*

declares: "PERICLES, who was a statesman, and not a professional orator, never wrote his orations. Like ARISTIDES, THEMISTOCLES, and the ancient orators, he improvised after laborious meditation. The impression produced was immediate and lasting; 'he left the goad in the minds of his hearers.' . . . Neither PERICLES nor his contemporaries thought of preserving such touching harangues. Only a few specimens of these masterpieces have been saved from oblivion. . . . What must that eloquence have been which is still so forcible and grand, half concealed under the veil of historian and interpreter?" As an orator he had acquired comprehensive general preparation, was proficient in all that was known of the arts of speech, and deeply meditated upon the topic, the composition of the assembly, and his specific aim.

The patriot orator.

It is generally supposed that DEMOSTHENES was exclusively a memoriter speaker, and his achievements have been displayed as a demonstration of the superiority of that method.

That he usually wrote his orations and confined himself to reciting them are indisputable; but that he never extemporized is untrue. In his first address the people derided him for the weakness and stammering of his voice, for the violence of his manner, which threw him into a "confusion of his periods and a distortion of his argument." It was concluded that he was not a man of much

genius, and PLUTARCH says, "A strong proof of this seemed to be that he was seldom heard to speak anything extemporaneously, and though people often called upon him by name to speak to the point debated, he would not do it unless he came prepared." To his friends he did not pretend to deny his previous application, but told them "he never wrote the *whole* of his orations, nor spoke without first committing part to *writing*."

He was accused of taking PERICLES for his model. "But this," says PLUTARCH, "he only did in adopting his action and delivery, and his prudent resolution not to make a practice of speaking from sudden impulse, or on any occasion that might present itself. . . . Yet, while he chose not often to trust the success of his powers to fortune, he did not absolutely neglect the reputation which may be acquired by speaking on a sudden occasion."

ERATOSTHENES, DEMETRIUS, PHILERIAN, and many others say there was "a greater spirit and boldness in his unpremeditated orations than in those he had committed to writing."

A rival of the king of orators.

Contemporary with DEMOSTHENES was DEMADES, who spoke wholly extempore, and was believed to be superior to DEMOSTHENES. PLUTARCH says "it was agreed on all hands that DEMADES excelled all the orators when he trusted to nature only, and that his sudden effusions were superior to the

labored speeches of DEMOSTHENES." Of DEMOSTHENES, THEOPHRASTUS said, "I think him worthy of Athens." Of DEMADES, "I think him above it."*

Professor BREDIF says that DEMOSTHENES had little success in improvisation, but when he was compelled to speak impromptu it was with an energy superior to that of his written orations; that the emergency "imprinted upon his mind an agitation the result of which was remarkably vigorous language."† Professor BREDIF also observes that DEMADES had a prompt conception and a ready language. In his extemporaneous speeches he often completely reversed the arguments which DEMOSTHENES had carefully studied and premeditated. Sometimes, also, when he saw DEMOSTHENES disturbed by clamor he subdued the populace by an appeal.*

DEMADES was of low origin and without principle, yet his extempore powers have maintained his fame till this day. His habit of writing has preserved the addresses of DEMOSTHENES; that of DEMADES, to make no notes, has consigned his to oblivion, as is the case with those of PHOCION, who was spoken of with DEMOSTHENES thus: "DEMOSTHENES is the greatest orator, PHOCION the most powerful speaker;" DEMOSTHENES himself saying, when PHOCION rose to oppose him, "Here comes the pruning hook of my periods."*

Also renowned.

*Plutarch, *Life of Demosthenes.* †*Political Eloquence of Greece*, p. 173.

Demosthenes criticised by Longinus.

Demosthenes endeavored to produce the effect of extempore speech, and attained greater success therein than any other generally memorizing speaker. Longinus says: "He seems to invert the very order of his discourse, and, what is more, to utter everything extempore; so that by means of his long transpositions he drags his readers along, and conducts them through all the intricate mazes of his discourse. Frequently arresting his thoughts in the midst of their career, he makes excursions into different subjects, and intermingles several seemingly unnecessary incidents; by this means he gives his audience a kind of anxiety, as if he had lost his subject and forgotten what he was about, and so strongly engages their concern that they tremble for and bear their share in the dangers of the speaker. At length, after a long ramble, he very pertinently but unexpectedly returns to his subject, and raises the surprise and admiration of all by these daring but happy transpositions." *

Notwithstanding these efforts, the style of his reported orations is so condensed as to lead Lord Brougham to doubt whether any such speeches were ever delivered. He appears to believe that these may be as prepared for delivery, but that Demosthenes added much to them while speaking.

I have introduced Demosthenes not to detract

* Dionysius Longinus on the *Sublime*, Smith's translation, p. 139.

from the triumphs of the memorizing method as employed by him, but to emphasize the facts that he was not exclusively a reciter; that he often improvised; that his influence might have been even greater had he possessed a larger measure of this power; and that in the judgment of many of his contemporaries he was at least equaled by certain extemporizers in power over the Athenian assemblies.

The advocate extraordinary.

CICERO studied under the best instructors of his time. He mastered Greek literature, and attached himself to the most distinguished men, notably SCAEVOLA the Augur; took notes of his lectures, committed to memory his maxims and sayings, followed him to the courts when he pleaded, and to the rostrum when he harangued the people. He watched the gestures of the best actors, and spent much time in reading, writing, and practicing declamation. While he dabbled in everything, "philosophy and oratory seem to have been the two chief objects of his study." At home he diligently declaimed the most striking passages in the Greek orators or in speeches he had heard.

He exerted his limbs to the utmost in speaking, and strained his voice to its highest pitch, in the open air, after the manner of the Italian orators.

Naturally of feeble constitution, just as he had reached an astonishing height in popular esteem, he developed symptoms of consumption, and was

obliged to retire two years for travel. But he improved his time by studying with the most celebrated masters of rhetoric.

When he had time for the work his orations were written and delivered from memory, but when pressed with business he spoke extemporaneously, and with the vanity natural to him he commended some of the orations which he thus pronounced as superior to other productions, but as he advanced in years his style became slow and measured.

The apostle to the Greeks.

That St. Paul was well instructed, had rare natural powers, and spoke extemporaneously can be inferred both from his references to himself and the New Testament reports of his speeches. His facility was derived from intense study, habitual meditation, and constant practice. That in general he dictated his epistles is therein avowed, and they exhibit the characteristics of impassioned extemporaneous oratory.

By reasoning of "righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come" he made Felix tremble. He extorted from Festus the eulogium "Thou art beside thyself; much learning doth make thee mad," and extemporized a reply which disproved the charge, but justified the compliment; and he elicited an interruption from Agrippa, to which his extempore reply is one of the noblest outbursts in the history of oratory.

Among the Christian fathers none were more celebrated for oratory than CHRYSOSTOM, who studied elocution under LIBANIUS, and often used notes, but rarely gave attention to them, surrendering himself to his impulses. He was strongly opposed to introducing into the pulpit a style "borrowed from the theater or the lecture rooms of declaimers." He affirmed that through the vanity of seeking applause by mere oratorical glitter the whole Christian cause would come to be suspected by the hosts. Sermons in his time were "sometimes, though rarely, read off entirely from notes or committed to memory; sometimes they were freely delivered, after a plan prepared beforehand; and sometimes they were altogether extempore."

The "Golden Mouthed."

CHRYSOSTOM himself states that his subject was frequently suggested by something which he met with on the way to church, or which suddenly occurred during divine service. He was ready to make use of whatever occurred, and one of his most impressive sermons was inspired by his seeing, in the winter time, many sick persons and beggars lying in the vicinity of the church.*

Of BOSSUET, described as the "CORNEILLE of preachers," it is said that in the employment of living words for the purpose of persuasion, he has never been transcended. When but sixteen he was asked to preach an extempore sermon

The "Eagle of Meaux."

* Neander, *Church History*, vol. ii, p. 317.

before a society "representing the cream of Parisian wit, beauty, virtue, and nobility," and responded in a manner that commanded sympathy and admiration. The major part of his discourses are lost, few of them, indeed, having been written out. "An hour or two before entering the pulpit he sat quietly meditating over his text; he scribbled some hasty notes on bits of paper, mostly appropriate passages from the fathers, occasionally writing out a sentence more complicated than usual; then he surrendered himself completely to the effect produced by the spirit of the moment and the impression made upon his audience." *

He was a master of Greek and Latin and knew the Bible almost by heart, so that LAMARTINE described him as "the Bible transfused into a man." Though he showed little taste for mathematics or physical science, as a student he achieved distinction in classics, sacred literature, and philosophy; constantly wrote didactic treatises and polemic discourses, and was the author of the first attempt at a philosophical treatment of history. Only men of similar accomplishments, training, and literary habits should presume to follow his method of preparing for public speech.

"The reviver of French pulpit eloquence."

LACORDAIRE, JEAN BAPTISTE HENRI, who attracted the largest audiences ever gathered in modern France, was an extemporaneous preacher. He

* Legouvé's *Art of Reading*

was educated for the legal profession, and obtained the highest honors in the law schools of Dijon and Paris, leaping almost at a bound to the front rank in his profession. In religious opinions he was first a deist and a follower of VOLTAIRE, from whom he turned to LAMENNAIS, whose writings against VOLTAIRE, especially his "Essay on Indifference," led LACORDAIRE to devote himself to Christianity.

The Count MONTALEMBERT, his intimate friend, accredits him with every physical and mental quality of the orator, and his contemporaries universally describe his voice as vigorous and vibrating, capable of infinite modulation, and his gestures as graceful, animated, and expressive.

An unpropitious début.

His first sermon in public was in the great Church of St. Roche, in Paris, and MONTALEMBERT says: "I was there. . . . He failed completely, and coming out everyone said, 'This is a man of talent, but he never will become a preacher.'" The failure, however, stimulated him to greater efforts. One year later he began conferences in one of the Paris colleges, his audiences often comprising six hundred persons, who spread his fame throughout Europe. The next year he was installed preacher at the Cathedral of Notre Dame, and the late Dr. R. W. DALE wrote of him that "he knew how to fascinate the intellect, kindle the imagination, and touch the heart of the most cultivated and of the

most illiterate." Whenever he was announced to preach the cathedral was surrounded long before the doors were opened, and Dr. DALE states that the aisles and side chapels were thronged by statesmen, journalists, members of the Academy, tradesmen, workingmen, high-born women, skeptics, socialists, devout Catholics, and resolute Protestants, "who were all compelled to surrender themselves for the time to the irresistible torrent of his eloquence."

Professor HOPPIN, in his elaborate volume on *Homiletics,* states that LACORDAIRE preached memoriter, but he is in error.*

A recent eulogium.

LACORDAIRE is worthy the name of the great reviver of pulpit eloquence in France in the nineteenth century, and as one of the most effective of modern preachers is properly included in the series entitled *Les Grands Écrivains Français,* published by HACHETTE, Paris, his Life being written by Le Comte D'HAUSSONVILLE. That work, on pages 147–149 in treating LACORDAIRE'S method, states that he was to the highest degree an extemporaneous speaker. He did not, indeed, presume to enter the pulpit without preparation, but it was internal and abstract. It was the fruit of his meditations, more mystical than literary, occupying the day before and sometimes only

* See *Art of Extemporary Preaching*, by T. J. Potter, Professor of Sacred Eloquence in the Missionary College of All Hallows, Dublin, chap. viii.

the same morning;—and always commingled with ardent prayers.

His plan was determined beforehand, but only in broadest outline, never in details. Philosophizing upon this method, the biographer remarks that in the man who has the gift of language, and in this he seems to think that gift wholly consists (a doubtful hypothesis), the abstract idea naturally takes the oratorical form, and when the thought evolves in its logical order the expression in which it has translated itself to the mind arrives. But often LACORDAIRE drew his most powerful effects from some movement which he had felt in his audience, of which he made himself the interpreter, or some interior emotion which stirred him, and the vibration of which his own language transmitted. The great secret of this power was the outpouring of a full mind, unbridled by the artifices of preparation with passion, at the same time overflowing and restrained.

Intellectual inhalation.

Only his education as a lawyer, his experience as a journalist, his constant habits of study, and profound meditation, superinduced upon natural gifts and absorbing devotion, would have justified this method.*

HENRY ST. JOHN BOLINGBROKE displayed oratorical and debating powers unrivaled in his time. It is affirmed of him that he was the first British

The "Lord of the Silver Bow."

*Art of Extemporary Preaching.

statesman whose parliamentary oratory was really a power; and that its pre-eminent characteristics were "copiousness and readiness, extreme fluency and spontaneity, combined with a brilliant felicity of phrase, the right expression seeming to spring up naturally along with the thought to be expressed."

We learn from Lord CHESTERFIELD how this power was obtained:

"The late Lord BOLINGBROKE without the least trouble talked all day long fully as eloquently as he wrote. Why? Not by a peculiar gift from heaven; but, as he often told me himself, by an early and constant attention to his style."*

Although not a fragment of his parliamentary eloquence has been preserved, his writings are so oratorical in style that they probably reveal the characteristics of his more elaborate speeches.

The people's prime minister.

Lord CHATHAM, having all the natural endowments of the orator, widely read, a student of the classics, a devotee of DEMOSTHENES, a veritable magician in speech, employed the extempore method. With all his gifts and his overwhelming spontaneity, in order to enlarge his vocabulary he twice read BAILEY'S Dictionary, and to master gesticulation and the control of the muscles of his face he habitually practiced articulation before a mirror. Such was the excitement when he spoke

* Letter 220.

that it was impossible to report him, and the speech which in its delivery and publication overthrew WALPOLE's ministry owes its written form to Dr. JOHNSON. The elements of his success were untiring practice, continual acquisition, and the habitual study of words, together with his personal character and achievements as a statesman and a natural susceptibility of being roused by the occasion.

The paragon of debaters.

The fame of CHARLES JAMES FOX as a parliamentary orator and debater is perennial, although he began awkwardly, was often almost unintelligible, abounded in repetitions, and was careless of his personal appearance.

PITT spoke of him as a magician, who laid a spell upon his hearers so long as words issued from his lips. ROGERS declared that he "never heard anything equal to Fox's speeches in reply. They were wonderful." CHARLES BUTLER said that "the moment of his grandeur was when, having stated the argument of his adversary with much greater force than his adversary had done, he seized it with the strength of a giant and tore and trampled it to destruction." EDMUND BURKE affirmed him to be "the most brilliant and accomplished debater the world ever saw." MACINTOSH accounted for his effects by his possessing "above all moderns a unison of reason, simplicity, and vehemence."

This prodigy of the forum was an absolutely extempore speaker. He justified repetition upon theory, and when told that a speech read well said, "Then it must have been a bad speech." With him it was a cardinal principle that to reach and maintain perfection it was necessary to speak constantly; and referring to this he said, "During five whole sessions I spoke every night but one; and I regret that I did not speak that night too!" Though volumes of his speeches in the House of Commons are published, none, except a eulogium of a deceased duke, the only speech he wrote out beforehand, is printed as it was delivered.

He had in view the conviction of those to whom he spoke, acquired all the information necessary to enable him to speak convincingly, had the manner of absolute sincerity, and carried earnestness and vehemence to the highest possibility of physical endurance; on which account he was called "the most Demosthenic orator since DEMOSTHENES."

A great father's great son.

The transcendent ability, and especially the eloquence and courage, of WILLIAM PITT caused him to be made Chancellor of the Exchequer before he was twenty-four years of age, and one year later he was recognized as the most powerful subject in Europe. MACAULAY says of him: "At his first appearance in Parliament he showed himself superior to all his contemporaries in command of

language. He could pour forth a long succession of round and stately periods without premeditation, without ever pausing for a word, without ever repeating a word, in a voice of silver clearness, and with a pronunciation so articulate that not a letter was slurred over. . . . He was at once the only man who could, without notes, open a budget, and the only man who, as WINDHAM said, could speak that most elaborately effusive and unmeaning of human compositions, a king's speech, without premeditation."

His own explanation.

The account given by PITT to Lord STANHOPE,* his biographer, is that he owed to this circumstance whatever readiness of speech he possessed and aptness in finding the right word: His father, Lord CHATHAM, "had bade him take up any book in some foreign language with which he was well acquainted, in Latin and Greek especially, and read out of this work a passage in English, stopping when he was not sure of the word to be used in English until the right word came to his mind, and then proceed." At first he had often to stop while seeking the exact reproduction of the idea in idiomatic English, but gradually acquired perfect facility and accuracy.

As yet without a rival.

GEORGE WHITEFIELD, after reading for a short time, is supposed to have spoken memoriter, and in oratorical power he is generally placed at the head

* *Life of Pitt*, vol. 1, p. 8.

of English preachers. Having made a thorough study of action, and possessing a voice of amazing compass, sweetness, and strength, judged by the efforts of his oratory, he is worthy to be classed with DEMOSTHENES. He repeated sermons frequently, and throughout his life was in the habit of doing so on his first appearance in any large community. Though early in his career he recited parts of sermons verbatim, he soon acquired the ability to take advantage of new situations, and of favorable or unfavorable responses, and as he grew older made greater use of the power of extemporizing. The reason that his published discourses seem dull is not alone, as has been alleged, that his manner was so impressive and persuasive that he would have swayed audiences whatever he might say, but because he added long extempore passages which are not included in the reports. His published discourses could not have required more than half an hour in delivery, but he frequently spoke twice, and sometimes three times, that length. The sermons which he preached within a few months of his death were extempore, and many of his most impassioned outbursts were pure improvisations.

A ruler of assemblies.

JOHN WESLEY was ordinarily a wholly extempore preacher. Many of his published sermons were written to serve as authorized expositions of the doctrines of Methodism, and some of these were

never read to an audience. Dr. JAMES H. RIGG justly contrasts the two names that represent respectively Calvinistic and Arminian Methodism: "WHITEFIELD, powerful preacher as he was, was yet more popular than powerful. WESLEY, popular preacher as he was, was yet more powerful in comparison with his fellows than he was popular."*

WESLEY'S preparation for extempore speech began in his youth, for he was a student and a master of logic, presided in the disputations of his college and as a fellow of the University, was a devotee of Anglo-Saxon, and to the day of his death cultivated his style with reference to clearness, force, and incisiveness.

"The Liberator."

DANIEL O'CONNELL began the profession of law in 1798, the year of the "Great Rebellion," and, though on account of his faith subjected in a variety of ways to caste hostility, he speedily gained a great name. He was an expert in criminal and constitutional law, divined the Irish character intuitively, was sagacious and cunning, and, though fifty years old when he entered Parliament, where he was expected to fail, he stood in the front rank as a debater. Having studied in the Catholic colleges of France, having seen the folly of the French Revolution, he was able to check the rash impulses of his countrymen toward socialistic sympathies and principles.

* *The Living Wesley.*

Great natural qualifications.

He was endowed with a commanding presence, strength to meet all possible demands, and a voice that would carry its modulations further than that of any speaker of whom authentic accounts have been given. HOLYOAKE, who often heard him, says of his power of adaptation that "he had a threefold voice: one of persuasiveness in the law court, one of dignity in Parliament, and another of resounding raciness on the platform."

A competent witness.

WENDELL PHILLIPS listened to him on several occasions, and, describing him, says: "We used to say of WEBSTER, this is a great effort; of EVERETT, this is a beautiful effort; but you never used the word 'effort' in speaking of O'CONNELL. It provoked you that he would not make an effort." After declaring that he thought that no orator he had ever heard equaled O'CONNELL, he asks: "Do you think I am partial? I will avouch JOHN RANDOLPH, of Roanoke, the Virginia slaveholder, who hated an Irishman almost as he hated a Yankee, himself an orator of no mean level. Hearing O'CONNELL, he exclaimed, 'This is the man; these are the lips the most eloquent that speak English in my day.'"

Allowing for the extravagance of praise and blame that characterized Mr. PHILLIPS and JOHN RANDOLPH, and conceding that his speeches were often marred by coarseness and envenomed by bitterness, and that exaggeration was his native

element, there can be no doubt that DANIEL O'CONNELL was one of the greatest of orators, and that his triumphs in different spheres belonged to the class that are possible only to those who speak extemporaneously.

With all his gifts O'CONNELL owed his success in so many fields to complete familiarity with the technique of his profession, to study and observation in every new sphere, and to ceaseless practice, yet most of all to a devotion to his race, his country, and his Church rarely paralleled.

An intellectual gladiator before two generations.

Aiming at the mastery of law, letters, science, oratory, and statesmanship, though frequently reading from manuscript or committing to memory his celebrated orations, Lord BROUGHAM attained the highest rank as an extemporaneous orator, and without the exercise of that power could not have maintained himself in the position of supremacy which he held through two generations. When less than fifteen years of age he founded a debating society, where he contended with JEFFREY, MURRAY, COCKBURN, and others who became famous. His biographers represent that he surpassed his contemporaries not in depth of knowledge or soundness of reasoning, but in astonishing flow of language, readiness in reply, the grace of his elocution, and his gift of irony, sarcasm, and ridicule.

I heard him seven years before his death. The

subject under consideration in the House of Lords was whether her majesty's government, in the interest of humanity, was not bound to protest against the atrocities perpetrated upon the Poles by the Russian government. Supposing that BROUGHAM had retired from public life, when I saw, moving excitedly upon his seat, a gaunt figure, with seamed face and eyes that gleamed under beetling brows like those of a wild beast, I asked, "Who is that restless old man?" The reply was, "That is Lord BROUGHAM; he acts as he always does when he is going to speak; it will be a rare day for you if you hear him."

Still "his bosom felt the fire."

A half hour later BROUGHAM leaped from the bench, and partly roared and partly hissed words harrowing to a citizen of the United States. One or two sentences illustrate its tenor: "Me Lawds, why are we looking askance at the Russian bear, at the half-civilized Tartars, when we can see across the Atlantic our own kith and kin cutting each other's throats over Negro slavery? And with what pretense of consistency can we rebuke the Czar before we have protested against them, and with what consistency can we rebuke them when we think of our own deeds?"

It was as though an old tiger waking from sleep had plunged head foremost against the bars of his cage, and then sunk back exhausted. I saw

enough to enable me to confirm the description of BROUGHAM by S. C. HALL:

"For a' that."

"Careless to a blamable extent of personal appearance, his clothes hung loosely about him as if his tailor when he made them had neglected to take his measure. His action was the reverse of graceful; his features coarse and somewhat awry, the well-remembered twitching of the nose giving to them rather a repulsive character; the eyes were not expressive except when animated, and then they rather reminded one of a vulture than an eagle—still in their fierceness and indicating the strength of expression so paramount in his flexible and powerful voice." *

The great Quaker commoner.

It is doubtful whether any modern orator in England has surpassed JOHN BRIGHT in mastery of his audience and in leaving a permanent personal impress. Like ABRAHAM LINCOLN'S, his first set speech was in favor of temperance; he was but nineteen years old when it was delivered. He began his public career by committing to memory what he intended to utter on the platform, "but," says DAVIDSON,† in a work published during Mr. BRIGHT'S lifetime, "he soon abandoned so clumsy and exhausting a method of address. Instead of memoriter reproductions, he held impromptu rehearsals at odd hours in his father's mill before Mr. NUTTALL, an intelligent workman and unspar-

* *The Retrospect of a Long Life*, p. 105.

† *Eminent English Liberals In and Out of Parliament.*

ing critic; but even now his perorations are written out with the greatest care."

Slightly divergent testimony.

GEORGE WILLIAM CURTIS states that a friend of his was told by BRIGHT that he "generally wrote out the more essential parts and the conclusion of an important speech;" but members of his family and other intimate friends have said that he did not attempt to confine himself to a verbatim recitation of any portions except definitive statements and the peroration, and that in preparing his best speeches he wrote only a few words, and those were in the exordium and the peroration.

In view of his precocity and the fact that, with the exceptions previously noted, so many of his speeches were practically extemporaneous, though the *Athenæum* could truthfully say, "The speeches of Mr. BRIGHT have greater literary value than those of any other orator of our time," his career is an illustration of the happy influence of a union of the practice of careful writing with the full play and constant use of the extempore process under a deep sense of responsibility and as consuming lore of his fellow-men.

When I visited the House of Commons he was in his prime, and his qualities of voice, pose, and gesture, his force, clearness, and picturesqueness of language were fully displayed. His spirit and manner recalled the self-possession born of long practice and confirmed by a consciousness of

authority the reflex influence of willing acquiescence in his leadership.

A greater contrast than that presented in the early opportunities of JOHN BRIGHT and those of WILLIAM PITT cannot easily be imagined as existing between men educated in schools. BRIGHT attended a Friends' school, where more attention was paid to moral than to intellectual culture; but when very young he was fascinated by the great poets, whose sentiments, vocabulary, and figurative style he assimilated.

The prince of convincers.

I saw RICHARD COBDEN sitting beside JOHN BRIGHT in the House of Commons. Perhaps no more persuasive speaker, whose power depended largely upon a clear and earnest statement of facts, has ever sat in the British Parliament. Speaking of the Treaty of Commerce with France in 1860, Mr. GLADSTONE six years later said: "I don't believe that the man breathed upon earth at that epoch, or now breathes upon earth, that could have effected that great measure, with the single exception of Mr. COBDEN."

His was the triumph of the pure extemporizer. In 1864 he wrote to Mr. DELANE, Editor of the *London Times:*

"It is known that I am not in the habit of writing a word beforehand of what I speak in public. Like other speakers, practice has given me as perfect self-possession in the presence of an audience

as if I were writing in my closet. Now my ever-constant and overruling thought while addressing a public meeting—the only necessity which long experience of the arts of the controversialist has impressed upon my mind—is to avoid the possibility of being misrepresented, and prevent my opponents from raising a false issue, a trick of logic as old as ARISTOTLE."

Yet this master persuader of hard-headed business men was nervous and confused in his first speech; in fact, he practically broke down, and the chairman had to apologize for him. For some time afterward he was so discouraged by his maiden effort that if he had been allowed to follow the bent of his inclination, he would never again have appeared as a public speaker.*

A sensitive yet militant personality.

Possibly FREDERICK W. ROBERTSON stimulated during his personal ministry a larger number of intellectual persons than any other clergyman similarly situated during the middle period of the present century; and by his published discourses and biography his posthumous fame was increased, and his influence, especially upon the ministry, correspondingly enlarged. As an orator he united, in proportions seldom found, highly emotional and intellectual power.

His development into an extemporizer was peculiar. When he began to preach he wrote his

* *Life of Richard Cobden*, by John McGilchrist, pp. 23, 24.

sermons throughout, and always on Saturday, the time between breakfast and one o'clock sufficing for a sermon.*

During his early career in Brighton he had occasion to write a letter of explanation to the bishop, in which he gives an account of writing out a sermon after he had preached it. In this he says: "The word 'extempore' does not exactly describe the way I preach. I first make copious notes; then draw out a form; afterward write copiously, sometimes twice or thrice, the thoughts, to disentangle them, into a connected whole; then make a syllabus; and, lastly, a skeleton, which I take into the pulpit."

Did not quite understand himself.

Yet this was extempore preaching, since the language which he uttered was not recited. In public speaking he lost sight of everything but his subject. "His self-consciousness vanished. He did not choose his words or think about his thoughts. He not only possessed but was possessed by his idea. . . . It was always as great a mental exertion to recall as to think out a sermon, and he was frequently unable, if he waited till Monday, to write out the notes of what he had delivered on Sunday, unless it had been partially written beforehand."

Another description from a later period represents him as thus proceeding: "When he began

* *Life and Times of Frederick W. Robertson*, p. 62.

his sermon he held in his hand a small slip of paper with a few notes upon it. He referred to it now and then, but before ten minutes had gone by it was crushed to uselessness; for he knitted his fingers together over it as he knitted his words over his thought. His gesture was subdued, sometimes a slow motion of his hand upward, sometimes bent forward, his hand drooping over the pulpit.

A fine description.

"It must not be supposed from this that he was a rhapsodist, for, though carried away by his subject, he was sufficiently lord over his own excitement to prevent any loud or unseemly demonstration of it; he was, indeed, a perfect illustration of the most conquering eloquence for the English people," which has more recently been made so famous by its greatest master, GLADSTONE, "that of the man who is all but mastered by his excitement, but who at the very point of being mastered masters himself—apparently cool while he is at a white heat—so as to make the audience glow with the fire and at the same time make the audience respect the self-possessed power of the orator."

He gave attention to special preparation of feeling. In a letter to a friend he wrote: "My mind is difficult to get into activity. Therefore, in order to prepare for speaking, preaching, etc., it is good to take a stirring book, even if not directly

touching upon the subject in hand. Love is all with me. Mental power comes from interest in a subject."

In private he was an almost incessant talker, and was usually as eloquent as when in the pulpit or on the platform. When moved, his conversation "had all the variety of a great stream—quick, rushing, and passionate when his wrath was awakened against evil; running in a sparkling glitter for many a mile of conversation over art and poetry and science and the topics of the day."

Ever "exercising his gifts."

He was an all-devouring reader, and more than that, being constantly attentive to current questions, which he studied thoroughly, making notes of debates in Parliament, following the latest publications in science, especially in chemistry, and giving much attention to history and poetry.

The matchless freshness of his style was quite compatible with occasional inconsistency; consequently he was often misunderstood, and frequently departed from the standards that he imagined he supported; but as an extemporizer he had all the virtues and few of the defects of the method, and attained his skill by practice and intelligent self-criticism.

Charles H. Spurgeon was in many respects the most effective extemporizer who has appeared in the English Protestant pulpit. This estimate is vindicated by the number of his discourses, their

variety, the richness of his vocabulary, the permanency of his power to attract, the enduring influence of his preaching upon moral and religious character, his success in securing funds for the support of diverse educational and philanthropic enterprises, and the fact that his fame increased for more than a quarter of a century, until impaired health required frequent and protracted absences. These constitute a series of achievements impossible under any other method of preaching.

Growth of resources.

His vocabulary was accumulated, word by word, by insatiable quaffing from every spring of English undefiled. His mind was absorbed in his life work, and perennially fruitful in fitting themes and original forms of treatment; and while acquiring information by untiring personal activity, he employed a searcher of ancient and modern authors to furnish him with materials. Like Bossuet, he gave little time to special preparation, selecting on Saturday afternoon and evening his texts, and preparing briefs. I heard him at intervals through his entire ministry in London. The limitations of his education were to be seen in the views he sometimes took of matters which he had not investigated rather than in his manner or language. Endowed with a voice perfect in tone, strength, and compass, a countenance unusually mobile, and a temperament suited to quick transitions, he did intuitively much which others must learn to

do; but without incessant application he could never have sustained himself, nor pruned the excrescences which in early years justly exposed him to adverse criticism.

The most wonderful extemporizer of the modern English-speaking world was WILLIAM E. GLADSTONE. A short address which I heard him make, though upon a question of parliamentary order, displayed his genius, for he invested the point with an interest which its inherent importance did not promise, and which from the lips of any other it could not have had.

He stands alone.

For sixty years he sustained the reputation of possessing, without exception, "the most omnivorous and untiring brain in England, perhaps in the whole world." At Eton and Oxford he captured with ease the highest distinctions, nor in all his subsequent multifarious duties did he cease to pursue classic, literary, and theological studies. He was able to extemporize in a fascinating manner, and hold an audience for hours while he discussed finance and complicated questions of diplomacy and legislation. In the middle period of his career he was spoken of as "an able orator of affairs," but from then until his death he exhibited an unparalleled versatility, and, what is more unusual, an increase of those impassioned oratorical impulses and utterances which usually attain their highest development in early life.

Rivals contrasted.

The contrast between GLADSTONE and his greatest rival, DISRAELI, afterward Lord BEACONSFIELD, from all points of view emphasized the unique individuality of each. The appearance of DISRAELI was impressive, enhancing the air of mystery which enveloped him. I saw him sitting without moving for some hours; though his eyes were closed, he sat bolt upright, and it was obvious that he was not sleeping. When he rose a deep, almost detonating, voice issued from his throat through lips that added to its resonance. Of all speakers he was the slowest; between words he continued vocalizing the syllable "eh," sometimes ten times, before uttering the next word. But the sentences reported verbatim in the *Times* of the next day were almost Miltonic, and there was not a superfluous word among them. Toward the close he became satirical and epigrammatic. Among his more marked peculiarities was that of hesitating to secure additional emphasis, acting apparently on the rule laid down by an eccentric teacher; "If you have anything specially good to say, boggle a little just before you utter it." In the opinion of his contemporaries he was the greatest parliamentary orator on the Tory side; and according to JUSTIN MCCARTHY, who heard most of his great speeches after 1860, "in sarcasm and in rhetoric he was admirable, and the more desperate his cause happened to be the more brilliantly he came to its

defence. His phrasing always told upon the house." But he was not an "easy speaker" when extemporizing; his perorations were doubtless most carefully written and recited. In contrast with him GLADSTONE's unsurpassed power of statement and exposition and "blood earnestness" appeared like the work of another order of being.

Simple but comprehensive plan.

Never too busy to reply to respectful letters, until age dimmed his vision and restricted in some measure his ability for work, GLADSTONE attempted to explain his methods of preparation; and perhaps to no one more clearly and concisely than to Professor PITTENGER, of the National School of Elocution and Oratory, who in 1883 published in his work on *Extempore Speech* a letter addressed to him, sixteen years before, by Mr. GLADSTONE. After stating that the public men of England are so engrossed by the multitude of cares and subjects of thought belonging to the government of a highly diversified empire, and probably are therefore less than others qualified either to impart to others the best methods of preparing public discourses or to consider and adopt them for themselves, he says: "Suppose, however, I was to make the attempt, I should certainly found myself mainly on a double basis, compounded as follows: First, of a wide and thorough general education. . . . Second, of the habit of constant and searching reflection on the subject of any pro-

posed discourse. Such reflection will naturally clothe itself in words, and of the phrases it supplies many will spontaneously rise to the lips. I will not say that no other forms of preparation can be useful, but I know little of them, and it is on those, beyond all doubt, that I should advise the young principally to rely."

CHAPTER XL

Celebrated Extemporizers—The New World

PATRICK HENRY, who has a sure place among the world's most powerful orators, never wrote a line of his speeches. He was naturally hesitating and timid, and had limited opportunities as a student, though he acquired a little Latin, Greek, and mathematics. He was not early inclined to application; at sixteen left school for work, kept a store, failed in the enterprise, worked at farming without success, and then tried merchandising again. Having failed in these pursuits, it occurred to him that he might at least earn a livelihood as a lawyer. He had read a few books, including a translation of LIVY, and had studied human nature while conversing with those who frequented his store. After practicing law for a few years with some success he leaped into fame by a single effort, known as "the speech against the parsons," in which his eloquence was magical. Two years later he was elected to the Legislature of Virginia, where, nine days after taking his seat, and on his twenty-ninth birthday, he moved a series of resolutions defending the rights of the colony, and pronouncing the Stamp Act unconstitutional and subversive of British and American liberty. When

An oratorical phenomenon.

he began almost the entire assembly was against him, but he overcame them. In 1773, with the aid of JEFFERSON and others, he carried through the Virginia House of Burgesses a resolution establishing committees of correspondence between the colonies, which gave unity to the revolutionary agitation.

Congressional triumphs.

His speech in the first Continental Congress won for him the position of the foremost orator in the western world. In that Congress he overthrew a plan of reconciliation between the mother country and the colonies, which would have left them in the relation to each other that later was established between England and Canada; he was the only man who in debate opposed the scheme advocated by many of the foremost members.

His eloquence was felt equally by the learned and the unlearned. According to THOMAS JEFFERSON, he possessed poetical fancy, sublime imagination, and overwhelming diction. JOHN RANDOLPH declared him a SHAKESPEARE and GARRICK combined.

Most authorities agree that his personal appearance was unfavorable; he did not display any power until he had become aroused. Much importance is attached to peculiar tones, the significance of his expression, and to the peculiar solemnity and appropriateness of his pose.

He never had a lesson in oratory, yet stands before the world as a speaker who wrought as

overwhelming effects as are attributed to DEMOSTHENES. He owed his success to practice in conversation and public speaking, and to courage to meet a crisis; and his influence was greatly enhanced by his high Christian character and a spotless reputation.

The great Kentuckian.

The manners and eloquence of HENRY CLAY were equally attractive, and he was a prince of extemporizers. While studying law in Richmond, Va., he was a leading member of a debating club, and when he began the practice of law in Lexington, Ky., he gained his first distinction by triumphs in a similar society. He was notably successful in criminal cases, but scarcely had time to become settled as a lawyer when he was drawn into politics, his speeches in mass meetings proving magnetic. They attracted the cultivated by their beauty of diction and delivery, and bore down opposition by their force. As a member of the Legislature he excelled in debate; and on entering the Senate of the United States, at the age of thirty, to fill a vacancy, he did not shrink from meeting in forensic contests any of the celebrated statesmen who composed the body. Returning to Kentucky at the expiration of his term, he was elected Speaker of the House, but left the chair and took an active part in the discussion of important questions. His speeches during the War of 1812 extended his reputation throughout the United States.

Until the end of his life he read much, and made it a rule never to lose an opportunity of taking part in debate on critical occasions; yet never presumed to do so without a clear understanding of his object and a judicious selection of the means to accomplish it.

The "godlike Daniel."

Daniel Webster usually wrote or thought out in sentences his set orations, but his pleas in court, many of his addresses in the Senate, and most of those on the platform were extemporaneous. Many statements attributed to Mr. Webster concerning his methods of preparation appear contradictory on the surface. To Senator Fessenden he said that the most admired figures and illustrations in his speeches, supposed to have been thrown off in the excitement of the moment, were the result of meditation. The speech, however, that he delivered in reply to Hayne took several hours; and its language must have been largely extemporaneous, for he had not had time to write it.

Peter Harvey says that as he was riding with Mr. Webster one morning the conversation turned on different ways of preparing speeches. Mr. Webster said, "No man not inspired can make a good speech without preparation." He then remarked that it had often been said that he made no preparation for the Hayne speech, and said, "That was not quite so. If it was meant that I

took notes and studied with a view to a reply, that was not true. But that I was thoroughly conversant with the subject of debate from having made preparation for a totally different purpose than that speech is true."

Fortunate coincidence.

After giving a full account of the circumstances he said: "If he had tried to make a speech to fit my notes, he could not have hit it better. No man is inspired with the occasion; I never was." To another, who asked him whether that speech was really, as had been asserted, extemporaneous, he replied: "O no. The materials of that speech had been lying in my mind for eighteen months, though I had never committed my thoughts to paper or arranged them in my memory."

To the same young minister he said, "Young man, there is no such thing as extemporaneous acquisition." *

In all his remarks relative to extemporaneousness he referred to ideas and knowledge, but he improvised the language of nearly all his speeches.

The testimony of EDWARD EVERETT is explicit as to WEBSTER'S extemporaneous powers, in the proper sense of the word: "I took pains to read every speech Mr. WEBSTER made from the time he left Washington (when making his trip over the Erie Railroad) till he got back to New York. He made

* Harvey's *Reminiscences of Daniel Webster*, pp. 151, 152, 154.

eleven speeches, distinguishing between speeches and mere snatches of remarks at stations. They were made when he was well advanced in years, and probably every one of them was extemporaneous. He could not have known when he went out of the cars to the platform what he was going to say, and yet every one of them was singularly adapted to the place and occasion; indeed, each speech was so complete that, if he had intended only to make any one, and had carefully prepared it, it could not have been improved. Every one of those eleven speeches—and I have read them carefully—would have added greatly to the reputation of any other man in the United States."

Examples of readiness.

They were just such addresses as so great a man and practiced a speaker, who had assiduously cultivated his style, whose knowledge was full and ideas clearly defined, would naturally make after having, throughout a lifetime, spoken extemporaneously in important causes.

Sargent Smith Prentiss, son of a prosperous shipmaster in Maine, grandson of a Harvard alumnus of the class of 1771, and himself graduated from Bowdoin College, was probably the most versatile of all the extempore speakers who have appeared in the United States. He left his alma mater at the age of seventeen and began the study of law. Judge Pierce, in whose office he was

registered, speaks of him as a lover of nature and of poetry, and an earnest student of law during the first part of the day, but devoting the evening to the best English writers. He read with wonderful rapidity, seeming to gather by intuition the prominent facts and incidents of every book through which he looked, and easily committed to memory the longest poems and prose quotations.

After migrating to the West he settled in Natchez, Miss., where for a time he taught, diligently cultivating his literary taste, and writing in prose and verse for local journals.

From the day he began to practice law his popularity was extraordinary. Members of the bar listened to him with wonder, and found him even more astonishing in private than he was in public.

Webster's outburst.

In 1838 he became a member of Congress, though his election was contested, and he spoke three days in defense of his right to the seat. Webster, Clay, John Quincy Adams, and other statesmen of the day were present. As Webster left the hall he exclaimed to a friend, "Nobody could equal it."

Subsequently Prentiss traveled through the United States, and everywhere his addresses were regarded as unequaled. At the dinner given to Daniel Webster in Faneuil Hall in 1838, when

Prentiss was but twenty-nine years of age, Edward Everett, then governor of the State, presided and pronounced one of the best of his orations. He was followed by Mr. Webster. After a long line of other speakers had been heard Prentiss arose. Edward Everett subsequently wrote: "Such was the lateness of the hour that, not having had the fortune to hear Mr. Prentiss, I must own that I feared he would find himself obliged, after a few sentences of customary acknowledgment, to give up the idea of addressing the company at length. But he was from the outset completely successful. He took possession of the audience from the first sentence. and carried them along with unabated interest, I think, for above an hour. It seemed to me the most wonderful specimen of a sententious fluency which I had ever witnessed. The words poured from his lips in a torrent, but the sentences were correctly formed, the matter grave and important, the train of thought distinctly pursued, the illustrations wonderfully happy, drawn from a wide range of reading, and aided by a brilliant imagination. That it was a carefully prepared speech no one could believe for a moment. It was the overflow of a full mind swelling in the joyous excitement of a friendly reception, kindling in the glowing theme suggested by the occasion, and not unmoved by the genius of the place. Sitting

A rare tribute.

by Mr. WEBSTER, I asked him if he had ever heard anything like it. He answered, 'Never, except from Mr. PRENTISS himself.'"

Versatility without limit.

General WADE HAMPTON, with a party of guests, was on board a yacht on Lake Pontchartrain when a speech was vociferously called for from PRENTISS. As he could not decline, he asked upon what subject they would like him to speak. A boat loaded with guano happened to be passing, and some one laughingly suggested that as a theme. At once he transported the company to the Lobos Islands, and delivered a speech which General HAMPTON declared a poem and an oration in one. While it was delivered the group of gentlemen in front of the speaker hung spellbound upon his lips.

The citizens of New Orleans were at one time interested in the establishment of an art gallery. RICHARD HENRY WILDE, one of the foremost orators of the South, who had lived long in Italy, and was recognized as an accomplished art critic and historian, delivered a scholarly oration, which was received with enthusiasm. Mr. PRENTISS, his warmly attached friend, then on a visit to the city, was among Mr. WILDE'S hearers. As the latter took his seat a cry arose for PRENTISS. He tried to escape, but the crowd carried him to the platform. He began modestly, and after a tribute to the beautiful oration to which they had listened he entered upon an address the magnificence of

which surpassed anything which his hearers could imagine. He recounted the achievements of Greek and Roman art, the influence of the Renaissance, of Arabic and Moorish architecture, and for an hour and a half poured forth the treasures of accurate knowledge derived from patient study.

Dr. W. H. Milburn related to me the following incident, upon the authority of his friend, Mr. Churchman, the sightless founder of the institution for the blind, at Nashville, Tenn., and for many years the principal of the school for the same unfortunate class at Indianapolis, Ind.:

There was a rally of the Whigs of the West at Nashville, Tenn., in September, 1844, when Henry Clay was candidate for the presidency, and was opposed by James K. Polk, the Democratic nominee. A multitude of Whigs from Illinois went to join in the demonstration, and especially to hear Prentiss. Mr. Churchman, who had lately reached the city, was in the crowd of more than thirty thousand gathered to hear the renowned orator. At the close of the speech he took out his watch to feel the hands, to ascertain how long Prentiss had been speaking, saying to his wife as he did so, "What a shame he stopped so soon!" But he found that they had been standing three hours closely packed in a swaying mass under a tropic sun. Prentiss held this blind hearer entirely by his words and inflections; his wondrously expressive

Actual hypnotism.

eyes and features and his significant gestures were shut out from him as by midnight darkness.

"Scipio, thou art but a man."

That evening the people, almost delirious with delight, thronged the public square in which stood the hotel where PRENTISS stayed, and shouted his name until he was obliged to appear on the balcony. He bowed his thanks and would have retired, but they cried, "A speech! a speech!" He tried to gratify them, but the prodigious strain of the day had proved too much even for his wonderful resources, and he fell swooning to the floor, which was the beginning of his breakdown.

He possessed a vigorous understanding and remarkable power of analysis, a memory of apparently boundless capacity, and a highly impressible temperament.

His voice was fascinatingly clear and sweet. Though he was spontaneously dramatic, and at times exceedingly vehement, he was unaffected in manner, and never violent. His achievements seem all the more extraordinary when it is remembered that he was pitifully lame and his gait peculiarly ungraceful.

Estimate of debate.

His own judgment was that he owed more to the practice of debate than to any other form of discipline, and in a letter to his brother GEORGE he said, "Let me particularly recommend you to cultivate the faculty of debating; of expressing your own ideas in the best and most effective manner." He

added: "There are hundreds and perhaps thousands of men in the United States who exceed HENRY CLAY in information on all subjects; but his superiority consists in the power and adroitness with which he brings his information to bear. I would again praise before any other acquisition that of expressing forcibly and with ease any idea which the mind may contain. This faculty is attained with difficulty in after life, but with ease in youth at college, and nowhere so well as in the debating societies of such institutions."

Natural gifts assiduously cultivated.

Most persons supposed his inimitable diction to be purely a gift of nature, but it was in a large degree the result of unintermitted attention to the formation and perfection of style. He was familiar with the Bible, SHAKESPEARE, MILTON, BACON, and other models of English speech, as well versed in classic mythology as in the history of his native land, and was equally at home in the æsthetic and martial realm of chivalry. His biographer writes, "Most of his important addresses were carefully premeditated, but not one of them was ever written; nor do I believe that a single passage in any was put on paper until after its delivery." He was of all men most susceptible to the influence of an audience, and to a friend who said to him, "PRENTISS, you always mesmerize me when you speak," he responded, "Then it is an affair of reciprocity, for a multitude always electrifies me."

As PRENTISS was at the summit of his brief career but little more than half a century ago, some writers have intimated that had he been subjected to New England standards, he would scarcely have endured the test. The testimony of EVERETT and WEBSTER would suffice on this point; but to theirs may be added that of WENDELL PHILLIPS, a greater orator than the first and worthy to be compared with the second. In characterizing one of the triumphs of PRENTISS, PHILLIPS thus refers to him, "The most eloquent of all Southerners, as I think Mr. SARGENT S. PRENTISS, of Mississippi." And in his oration on DANIEL O'CONNELL he exclaims, "I remember the solemnity of WEBSTER, the grace of EVERETT, the rhetoric of CHOATE; I know the eloquence that lay hid in the iron logic of CALHOUN; I have melted beneath the magnetism of SARGENT S. PRENTISS, of Mississippi, who wielded a power few men ever had."

Could endure any test.

This was the name which WENDELL PHILLIPS placed at the head of the American orators of his time wherewith to compare his hero.

STEPHEN A. DOUGLAS was an impressive and popular extemporizer; he was short of stature and in his earlier days thin, but his vigor of mind and his courage were such that the people gave him the sobriquet of "Little Giant." In two weeks after beginning the practice of law in Illinois he addressed a large Democratic meeting in defense of

Another type.

General JACKSON's administration. He rapidly became prominent, and was elected attorney-general before he was twenty-two. He was chosen a member of the Legislature, and after filling that position and being defeated for Congress by only five votes, was appointed Secretary of State; before he was twenty-eight he was elected a judge of the Supreme Court; at thirty he was sent to Congress, and was twice re-elected by increasing majorities, but before his third term began he was chosen senator, being re-elected in 1852 and 1858.

An opponent's eulogy.

When, in 1858, he heard that ABRAHAM LINCOLN was to oppose him for the senatorship he said to J. W. FORNEY, who, in his *Anecdotes of Public Men*, declares that DOUGLAS had never met his match before: "I shall have my hands full. He is the strong man of his party—full of wit, facts, dates, and the best stump speaker in the West. He is as honest as he is shrewd; and if I beat him, my victory will be hardly won."

Colonel JOHN HAY, the biographer of ABRAHAM LINCOLN, thus contrasts the participants: "The men were perhaps equally matched in oratorical ability and adroitness in debate, but LINCOLN's superiority in moral insight, and especially in far-seeing political sagacity, soon became apparent."

In Congress none surpassed DOUGLAS in influence. As chairman of the Committee on Terri-

tories, then closely related to slavery, he carried through bills organizing the Territories of Minnesota, Oregon, Utah, New Mexico, Washington, Kansas, and Nebraska. He supported the compromise measures of 1850, including the fugitive slave law.

When denounced as a traitor by the Common Council of Chicago, which enjoined the city police to disregard the laws, and when a meeting of citizens was held which resolved "to defy death, the dungeon, and the grave," in resistance to the execution of the law, Mr. DOUGLAS appeared upon the stand and announced that the next evening he would speak at the same place in defense of his course. He did so, and at the close of the speech the meeting unanimously resolved to sustain all measures relating to slavery which Mr. DOUGLAS had supported. On the following evening the Common Council repealed its resolutions by a vote of twelve to one. In the national campaign of 1840 he traveled seven months and addressed two hundred and seven meetings in Illinois in favor of MARTIN VAN BUREN, who carried the State, although WILLIAM HENRY HARRISON was elected President.

Routing the enemy.

In 1858 and 1860 he journeyed through the Southern States, boldly denying the right of secession, and defining the Union as a union of sovereign States, independent in all local matters, but bound together by the Constitution in an indissoluble

compact; and affirming the Federal government to be a national government, inherently possessing all powers essential to its own preservation.

Probably his most powerful address was made on the third of March, 1854, in closing the debate which he had opened one month previously. Many of the ablest senators from the North and the South opposed the passage of the bill which was popularly called "Squatter Sovereignty." It was 11:30 in the evening when Mr. DOUGLAS rose, and he spoke until dawn to a crowded house. This effort was by friends and foes considered a splendid forensic triumph. Among its distinguishing elements were his readiness in reply, the correctness of authorities, the extent of information, the clearness of views, and the new points presented. The bill passed by an overwhelming majority.

A marvelous contrast.

I heard ABRAHAM LINCOLN and STEPHEN A. DOUGLAS. The one six feet and four inches in height; the other hardly five feet and four. The one awkward to the verge of grotesqueness; the other as dignified as DANIEL WEBSTER; LINCOLN, with a high-pitched voice, DOUGLAS, with a basso profundo; LINCOLN abounding in transitions, weirdly fascinating by his strange figure, postures, and gestures, DOUGLAS rarely departing from a dignified oratorical manner. Yet it was the declamation of arguments. He used no ornaments,

was not verbose, was easily understood, possessed immense power of assertion, perfect coherence in argument, and wore the aspect of deep seriousness and sense of responsibility. He appeared to advantage in private life, and was always ready to converse upon his principles and plans.

His skill and power were attained by a careful study of great orations of the early days of the republic and of the British Parliament. When a judge of the Supreme Court he familiarized himself with decisions important for clearness of statement and strength of argument, and when he first took his seat in Congress he listened critically to the orators. He had the habit of invariably reflecting upon his own speeches after delivery, to ascertain by what means he succeeded, or to note why he failed or might have made a deeper impression.

The master of the crisis.

Abraham Lincoln, with limited opportunities, disciplined and informed his mind while his body was strengthening and elongating, until intellectually and physically he was head and shoulders above his companions. His powers were developed by private arguments and off hand speeches, till at the age of twenty-three, as a candidate for the Legislature, though defeated in the election, he received in the place of his residence two hundred and seventy-seven votes against three; two years later, and successively for three terms, he was chosen at the head of the list. At thirty-

seven he was elected to Congress, and after the expiration of his term achieved conspicuous success at the bar; he also became the most influential exponent of the principles of the Whig party in Illinois. Later he was the head of the party which spread throughout the Western States to oppose the opening of the Territories to slavery. Not, however, until he canvassed the State as candidate for the Senate of the United States, with STEPHEN A. DOUGLAS as his opponent, did his fame spread throughout the land. It was in his speech accepting the nomination that he spoke the following words, perhaps the most comprehensive, the most conservative, yet the most agitating ever uttered in the United States:

Condensed prophecy.

"A house divided against itself cannot stand. I believe this government cannot endure permanently half slave and half free. I do not expect the Union to be dissolved; I do not expect the house to fall; but I do expect that it will cease to be divided. It will become all the one thing or all the other. Either the opponents of slavery will arrest the further spread of it, and place it where the public mind shall rest in the belief that it is in course of ultimate extinction, or its advocates will push it forward until it shall become alike lawful in all the States, old as well as new, North as well as South."

I have referred to his mastery of words, and

place him here as an example of rarely equaled extemporaneous power. His election as President of the United States, the extraordinary events which took place during his term, and the tragedy which cut short his career have enhanced the fame of those closing years, and to some extent obscured the memory of his greatest oratorical triumph. By contrast with him Senator DOUGLAS is remanded to a less conspicuous place than that to which he is clearly entitled in the history of the United States, at least in recurring references to past events.

It is impossible for anyone to form an adequate idea of ABRAHAM LINCOLN'S marvelous abilities as a debater and popular orator who does not familiarize himself with the career, influence, and personal characteristics of STEPHEN A. DOUGLAS.

When ABRAHAM LINCOLN was a member of Congress he wrote to a friend that he had just heard ALEXANDER H. STEPHENS, of Georgia, who weighed scarce a hundred pounds, make the most eloquent address to which he had ever listened. Throughout a long life Mr. STEPHENS delivered addresses characterized by clearness, beauty of language, intense earnestness, and frequently by solemnity of manner; and whether inconsistent with previous speeches or not, they proceeded from a principle which he avowed, and with which his lucubrations at the time were compatible. His

Multum in parvo.

oratorical power persisted in spite of the disabilities induced by constitutional weakness, increased by acute attacks. Such was the confidence in his honesty that, though he delivered an impressive Union speech in 1860, in 1861 he was made Vice President of the Confederate States of America. In 1866 he was elected to the Senate of the United States, but was not allowed to sit, as Congress at that time would not recognize the restoration of Georgia to the Union. In 1874 he was elected to the House, and his speech on the twelfth of February, 1878, on the unveiling of the painting "The Signing of the Emancipation Proclamation" was eulogized throughout the Union.

It was my good fortune to have a long personal interview with him on a New Year's Day, when he was receiving in Washington. Referring to his old friends, ABRAHAM LINCOLN, HENRY CLAY, DANIEL WEBSTER, Judge STORY, and many others, he incidentally suggested some of his methods of preparing for public speech.

Light on his methods.

The life of his distinguished brother, LINTON STEPHENS, of the Supreme Court of Georgia, enables the reader to ascertain the principles which governed his own life, and which he enforced upon his brother and ward, and how much ALEXANDER H. STEPHENS himself owed to the instruction of another extemporaneous orator, STEPHEN OLIN. Writing to his brother LINTON concerning his

method of studying rhetoric and mental philosophy, ALEXANDER H. STEPHENS says, "The fundamental principle is to understand everything so as to recollect and repeat it—that is, the idea, but not the words."

Interesting criticisms.

Of the difference between spoken and written eloquence he wrote: "RHETT made decidedly the best speech I have heard made in the House. It was short, as well as all the rest of them, but such are generally the most interesting—set speeches I detest—and the latter part highly impassioned. I do not know how it will appear in the report, or even how it will read if written just as it was delivered, but it was first-rate to hear; but I have long since been of the opinion that eloquence depends mainly upon action and manner."

The next day he wrote: "Just as I expected, it reads like a poor affair in the report, and the meanest speeches, such as were not listened to at all, for instance, are quite as good as this which produced such a sensation in the House."

He instructs his brother never to speak without adequate preparation, and only when he can appear to the best advantage; yet to practice as often as possible. He urges upon him the importance of moot courts (in which the speeches are extempore), constant practice, and mastery of the theme, so that he can speak at any moment upon any part of it. Nevertheless he warns him never to

attempt to make a fine speech for the sake of doing it, and assures him that these were the methods which he had himself followed.

A modern Chrysostom.

Bishop MATTHEW SIMPSON began as an extemporaneous speaker, and adhered to that method through life, although he knew it might cost him many failures. Professor HAMNETT, of Allegheny College, one of his early friends, states that he persisted in the effort, though "some of his early sermons were very moderate." It was his practice to collect texts in a notebook, meditate upon them, and then use them quite suddenly for a discourse. Once he wrote a sermon in full and memorized it, but only once.* He states that his selection of words and plan of discourse were only and always to persuade men to be reconciled to God. He never spoke without deepest feeling, and unless he perceived a strong influence upon the congregation, he felt sad, sought retirement, and gave himself to prayer and self-examination.

Having been graduated in medicine, he was versed in natural science; he read the Bible in Hebrew and Greek daily, and also studied both French and German. After he had been in the ministry four years he settled upon a method of preparation to which he adhered. He preached from skeletons, and frequently came to Saturday night with no other preparation than his notebook of texts,

* Yale Lectures on *Preaching*, p. 162.

his meditation, and the rich material supplied by daily contact with his people. His visits were strictly pastoral, rarely social, and he devoted much time to the poor, the afflicted, and the suffering.

Biographer's comments.

"In his later years," says his biographer, Professor GEORGE R. CROOKS, "he would walk his room for a couple of hours, meditating his theme, before going to the pulpit, and when on the point of starting for church would sit down and draw off a skeleton, which would be left lying on the table where it was written."

Professor CROOKS felt it necessary to suggest that this "is a hazardous method for anyone who has not the resources of genius to draw upon." Yet ADAM CLARKE, the English commentator, who for forty years, and while much of the time actively engaged as a minister, devoted himself to the study of the Bible in the original languages, producing a monumental work, pursued a still more perilous method. He never selected a text until he entered the pulpit. But such was the fullness of his knowledge and his fluency, natural and acquired, that he was followed from place to place by a person who heard him more than seven hundred times without hearing the same passage twice expounded.

HENRY WARD BEECHER'S evolution as an extemporizer was gradual. Early in his ministry many

of his sermons, if not all, were delivered from quite full manuscripts; but during his last twenty years he took into the pulpit a mere brief, hardly worthy the name of a skeleton. Sometimes, in fifteen or twenty minutes, he prepared his notes on the margins of newspapers.

During the civil war I sat within a few feet of him upon the platform in the Philharmonic Hall, in Liverpool, England, when he delivered his memorable address in defense of the Federal government. An organized opposition, for the purpose of breaking up the meeting, was manifest. More than two hundred men had been stationed in different parts of the house, and when Mr. BEECHER began to read from a manuscript they remained quiet for a few moments, but then began to stamp, and shouted: "Shut up your book;" "You are a coward;" "You are afraid to speak out like a man." The voices increased in volume and number until it was difficult, even upon the platform, to hear Mr. BEECHER'S words. He had prepared an argument to show that it would be to the advantage of a commercial city to sympathize with the North, and read on till the uproar became intolerable; then, when from sheer exhaustion the disturbers paused, he began to speak, and for more than an hour exhibited every form of power that an orator has been known to employ—short, sharp, and decisive arguments, sententious

More than conqueror.

phrases, pathos, satire, vehemence, persuasive appeals, bursts of indignation, anecdote, loud swelling passages, fine bits of description, lofty moral sentiments, practical aphorisms, contemptuous references to stupidity and hired brutality, and wit which made even its victims laugh, followed by a pitiless hail of denunciation, until, just as he had silenced all but a few trombone voices that continued mechanically, his own voice failed.

"The silver-tongued Orator."

WENDELL PHILLIPS, born of a vigorous, intelligent, and cultivated ancestry; endowed by nature with beauty, strength, grace, and a rarely mellifluous voice; cultivated in the best society, and under the influence of the first college in the land, stands unparalleled among American orators as a model of diction, grace, and fearless fidelity to conviction. His first great success was won by an utterly unprepared, a strictly extemporaneous address. And he nearly always spoke without notes. On the few occasions when he used them one of his biographers says, "It was like an eagle walking." Early in his career he prepared his speeches with care. One of his intimates writes, "During that period of incessant practice, which EMERSON makes the secret of his power, he relied generally upon his vast accumulated store of facts and illustrations, and his tried habit of thinking on his legs." He summed up in two sentences his own habit of preparation:

"The chief thing I aim at is to master my subject. Then I earnestly try to get the audience to think as I do." Even his great lectures, such as "The Lost Arts" and "Daniel O'Connell," though carefully prepared, were never written out. THOMAS WENTWORTH HIGGINSON observes that WENDELL PHILLIPS firmly believed "that the two departments of literature and oratory are essentially distinct, and could not well be combined in the same person. He had made his choice, he said, and had abandoned literature. It was hard to persuade him to write even a pamphlet or a circular, although, when he did, it was done with such terseness and vigor as to refute his theory." *

When not speaking he was accumulating knowledge adapted to aid him. He was perfect in his favorite language, French, and read German, Italian, and Spanish, and retained his scholarly habits till the close of life. He was an amateur chemist, a constant reader of newspapers, as close a student and almost as complete a master of the "art of putting things" as ABRAHAM LINCOLN. It was impossible for him to regard reading as a useful method of public address, and his opinion is illustrated by an incident which he told with zest: "After spending the night with an old clerical friend, who had the habit of reading his sermons, I asked him why he did so. He went

All was grist.

* *Atlantic Monthly*, vol. lxxxi, pp. 188, 189.

on to give me the reasons, and became animated. 'Well,' I said, 'I am tired to-night, but I have been very much interested in what you said. Nevertheless, if you had read your remarks, I should have gone to sleep.'"

Characteristics.

The wondrous voice of WENDELL PHILLIPS in its middle and lower notes was smooth, sweet, and penetrating, but had little range in the higher register. One of his biographers describes it as "thin;" but it was worse than that—it was nasal. Only when he raised the pitch above the medium was there a vestige of what is known as the Yankee twang. But he seldom did so. In all the speeches that I heard him deliver there were but a few occasions when he elevated his voice above its sweetest key; on several of these he seemed petulant.

The analysis of his style in MARTYN'S *Life of Wendell Phillips* is admirable: "He made many more gestures than he got credit for; but they were so subordinated to the thought and so illustrative of it that they eluded attention, and seemed only parts of one whole."

HIGGINSON in his memorial notice thus describes his manner of speech: "The keynote to the oratory of WENDELL PHILLIPS lay in this: that it was essentially conversational—the conversational raised to its highest power. Perhaps no orator ever spoke with so little apparent effort, or began

so entirely on the plane of his average hearers. It was as if he simply repeated, in a little louder tone, what he had just been saying to some familiar friend at his elbow. . . . The colloquialism was never relaxed; but it was familiar without loss of keeping. . . . But as the argument went on the voice grew deeper, the action more animated, and the sentences came in a long, sonorous swell, still easy and graceful, but powerful, as the soft stretching of a tiger's paw."

Tributes extraordinary.

James Bryce, in the *American Commonwealth*, vol. ii, p. 69, says that "he was, in the opinion of competent critics, one of the orators of the present century, and not more remarkable for the finish than for the transparent simplicity of his style, which attained its highest effects by the most direct and natural methods."

John Bright declared to George J. Holyoake that Wendell Phillips was "the most eloquent voice which spoke the English tongue." *

He wove such a spell as to extort compliments from those who hated his sentiments and, therefore, because of the bitterness of his invective, they regarded him as a personal enemy. The Richmond *Inquirer* gave him a sharp thrust, yet in the same sentence the editor paid both his rhetorical style and his delivery the highest tribute, when, some years before the civil war, it

*Holyoake, *Public Speaking and Debate*, second and revised edition, p. 1.

said, "WENDELL PHILLIPS is an infernal machine set to music."

Contagious example.

As an orator he performed a service for the English-speaking world. MARTYN credits him with having by his style "set a fashion. It taught the bar, the pulpit, the platform, the value of high-bred conversationalism as the most effective vehicle of thought and emotion. With his advent roar and rant went out of date. The era of trained naturalism opened. Thus he made every speaker and every audience his debtor." *

There were, however, prior to his time isolated examples both in Europe and America. FÉNELON in his *Dialogues of Eloquence* commends the colloquial style. JOHN WESLEY taught the method and personally illustrated it, but scarcely a majority of his preachers have practiced it. To this day many who attempt to do so have not the conversational manner, and many who have do not rise in thought above the level of ordinary unprepared conversation. What WENDELL PHILLIPS did was to demonstrate the adaptation of the "dignified colloquial" to every style of address, from the lecture in academic halls to scathing invective or solemn appeal in popular assemblies.

* *Wendell Phillips*, p. 505.

CHAPTER XLI

Can All Extemporize?

Not everyone who might attain success as a reader or reciter can acquire the power of speaking extemporaneously in an equally effective manner.

Inherited disqualifications.

Some men of high intellectual ability and much learning are of too slow a normal rate of mental motion to speak without thinking through each sentence verbally before uttering any part of it. They pause so long between words and sentences as to make it insufferably tedious to follow them. After speaking a while some of these proceed more rapidly, yet a stenographer's report would show that they do not then enunciate as many words per minute as do most participants in the dullest conversation. Their attempts to increase fluency in the earlier stages of the address fail. Nevertheless, it is not uncommon for such, in an outburst of emotion, to speak with a vehemence not in harmony with the state of the audience, which remains unmoved.

There are those who seem devoid of the power of language; although intelligent and educated, they are incapable of conversation, cannot recall the names of their neighbors or of the most familiar historical characters, and do not narrate their own

experiences connectedly. The training of a lifetime would not be sufficient to make acceptable extemporaneous speakers of such.

Others ordinarily make no impression because so constituted that, when reflecting upon an important subject, they grow abstracted, take no note of surroundings, and become soliloquizing phantoms, receiving no stimulus from the audience, unaware of the flight of time, and moving in the realm of pure intellect.

Pathological impediments.

Some are too weak physically to endure the nervous strain, the erect posture so affecting their circulation as to occasion severe palpitation of the heart or a rush of blood to the brain, which do not accompany the reading of a discourse; and with others natural timidity is so great that they are unable to bring themselves to believe that success is possible. They not only have stage fright, but are terrified before they ascend the stage.

None of these could ever obey LUTHER, that great extemporizer, whose rules were, "Stand up cheerily;" "Speak up manfully."

Occasionally appear men of powerful intellect, neither diffident nor abstracted, but strong enough for the task, yet unable to speak extemporaneously because of the excessive vigor of their minds and their irrepressible ardor. This temperament frequently induces in its possessor ex-

travagance in eulogy and denunciation, and even rhapsodical or incoherent language.

These may read or recite.

Under a conscientious, rigid determination to extemporize some have passed their lives below their natural elevation. These should endeavor to compose in the style of the best extemporizers, and master the ability to speak extemporaneously in short passages. Men have done this to their relief and to the increase of their power. There are clergymen in conspicuous positions who laboriously compose short discourses displaying marked ability and originality, who in extemporaneous speech would be uninteresting. Such should master the art of oratorical reading, or commit their discourses and spend their lives in acquiring a delivery resembling free speech.

On account of failing memory or the relaxing nerves of age some successful extemporizers have adopted the practice of writing and reading, and a few of these, like the celebrated Edward N. Kirk, have doubtless prolonged the period of effectiveness. They are exceptions to the rule, that the contrast between the delivery of spoken and written productions is so greatly to the disadvantage of the latter that, unless one make amends for it by brevity, he is considered as furnishing by the adoption of a new method and a want of success therein a double proof of the decline of his faculties.

Seldom successful.

Until an intelligent, determined, persistent trial shall have proved unavailing, no one who desires the power of extemporizing successfully should settle into the conviction that he cannot attain it. Without experiment it is impossible to ascertain whether diffidence may not be overcome; whether abstraction may not be so reduced as to permit adequate perception of surroundings and the recognition and cultivation of proportionate development; and whether overmastering fluency may not be curbed.

An American minister of my acquaintance, as impassioned as Dr. CHALMERS, and whose words, when speaking extemporaneously, came so fast that he stammered from sheer inability to utter them, and so was compelled to write and read his sermons and lectures, was, at the age of fifty, elected to an important representative position which required him to travel widely and address large audiences. He had often affirmed that it would be impossible for him to speak without full notes, yet he resolved to gain the power, and within two years became, without manuscript, more famous as an orator and preacher than before.

Happily undeceived.

So many who have thought they could never succeed have done so; so many who have attained success with notes have increased it by renouncing them; and so many who at first failed frequently

have improved surprisingly, that I have long believed that not more than one in twenty-five who can speak effectively by any method would fail to enlarge their ability to convince and persuade were they to make an intelligent, a resolute, and an enthusiastic effort to master this art.

CHAPTER XLII

Suggestions to Neophytes

The first step.

A LAW STUDENT without collegiate education, who has given no thought to methods of speech, should become a member of a debating society, or, if there be none, he should endeavor to find others like minded who will combine to form one. He should take part in discussion whenever opportunity occurs, should master parliamentary law, prepare upon every question, and always be ready to accept the position of substitute. Extempore speeches in debate, premeditated as to their main points, and impromptu replies depending wholly upon the demands of the occasion jointly form the best method of practice. He should narrowly observe the errors, defects, and unpleasant personal peculiarities of his fellow-members, and reflect closely upon their causes.

In an address to the Law Students' Society, of Hastings, England, a great English barrister, now Lord Chief Justice of England, said: "To my mind, the first use of a society like this is its bringing together of young men to rub off the sharp edges of their peculiarities and prejudices, and create among them a standard of opinion which is useful to each and to all. The next use

of a society is that it promotes a desire of information. I place only in the third rank that which I see often placed erroneously in the first, namely, facility of speech."

He was careful to explain that he did not underrate the importance of clear, direct, incisive speech—"clearness above all things, with incisiveness and directness next, are qualities which stand by any man who has to use his tongue." But he is credited with this personal testimony: "While I have known hundreds of men who could with facility and elegance, not to say glibness, say nothing, I have never known a man who had anything worth saying who was not in command of adequate language to say it." I direct attention to the latter part of the statement as one of the extravagances to which a fluent extemporaneous speaker is liable; for there are hundreds who know many things worth saying, and can converse intelligibly and forcibly in the familiar intercourse of private life, who are not able to express their sentiments in a formal meeting of any kind, much less in a large assembly.

An overdrawn statement.

Based on this statement, he advised the young men in those societies "not to get up for the sake of talking," but told them to keep their seats unless they had "something to say." Wiser counsel would have been, Never to speak under moral, financial, or advisory responsibility when unpre-

pared; always to be thinking, but in these societies to talk with or without premeditation whenever they have the opportunity is the best way to overcome embarrassment, to attain facility, and perfect the instruments of expression.

Some analogies.

As well might one instruct a person desiring to learn a foreign language never to talk for the sake of talking, but to maintain silence until he can speak correctly. Much more attention should be given to clear thinking and to storing the mind with information than to securing facility of speech; but the two should go hand in hand from the beginning to the end of one's general preparation for extemporizing. And as the painter learns the technique of his art long before his conceptions attain their highest elevation, so the art of speaking well may, and often must, be acquired before the mind attains its loftiest reach and clearest vision or the vocabulary its richest endowment.

The young minister should pursue a similar course, and in the meetings held by clergymen for mutual improvement he will have no difficulty in finding opportunities to debate.

The college student who desires to master this art should read, think, converse, and perform his part in the secret or open societies, and may with profit indulge in arguments with his fellows; but he should not confound conversation with argumentation. He should make a special study

of narration, detailing his various experiences and the results of his reading to those who are interested in him sufficiently to listen, and if he perceives them grow indifferent, should try to make the tale so fascinating that they can but listen.

The reader and reciter may make laborious private preparation for the hour of a fixed appointment, but this would be fatal to the extemporizer. He should never decline to speak when the theme is of interest, and if no opportunity occurs, should set about in a delicate way to create one. It is a sound proposition here, as elsewhere, that "every successful man makes more opportunities than he finds." He should apply all the principles set forth for increasing his capital of ideas and facts, and may wisely adopt the rule of William Pinckney—never to see a new idea well expressed without committing the passage to memory; taking pains, also, to remember the name of the author.

Delay not.

No young man should postpone, until his education is completed and his reputation as a man of culture and oratorical power is established, familiarizing himself with the process of extemporizing. He should begin at once. A tree cannot be pruned before it starts to grow. No one ever walks or talks who did not begin before he knew how to accomplish the act. It is folly to make a reputation as a reader or reciter as a means of success in

extemporaneous oratory. I do not mean to imply that success has not occasionally been superinduced upon such a career, but whatever was valuable in the preliminary exercise may be attained without it, and various impediments avoided that were unconsciously acquired.

False starts.

In endeavoring to break from the thraldom of confinement to pen or slavery to memory many have pursued a course which could but result in failure, and have concluded, often erroneously, that they were incapable of extemporizing. They have been depressed, and, like caged birds, have looked with envy upon others soaring or flying at will from point to point, and find little consolation except when listening to some inferior speaker or when present at the failure of an extemporizer of high repute.

One of the most futile attempts was that of Dr. Richard S. Storrs, as described by himself. As a student of law under Rufus Choate he frequently heard his preceptor, and also Daniel Webster and Benjamin R. Curtis, who, without notes, were in the habit of speaking constantly before the full bench or to the jury. He determined to acquire the art, and while a student practiced to some extent, but his progress was unsatisfactory. In his first settlement he had a critical audience, who were anxious that he should make a fine impression on cultivated visitors of other forms of faith, and

they were uneasy when he rose without notes and jubilant when they saw them. He tried more than once to speak extemporaneously, but "it was all the time like swimming up the rapids." Then he experimented with a somewhat full skeleton, filling in with any suggestions that might come. He declares this to have been the poorest possible plan, as the intervals were not long enough for his mind to get "freely, freshly, vigorously at work." "The sermon became a series of jerks."

Hope deferred.

During the year that he remained in Brookline he had little success in extemporizing. When he first preached in Brooklyn, N. Y., he had no manuscript with him, but spoke on a subject which he had written upon and thoroughly analyzed. He found that his mind worked with a facility, a sense of exhilaration, which he had never experienced when reading, so that when "called" there he determined to preach extemporaneously, and the first time after his installation did so. He says: "It was an absolute failure so far as any sense of liberty on my part or any useful effect on the people were concerned." He staggered along for about twenty-five minutes, and stopped. The people were greatly disappointed, and he was sick at heart. He returned to the manuscript method, and continued to read his sermons for more than a dozen years, when he adopted the plan of speaking in the morning extemporaneously and reading in

the evening; but he subsequently became and has remained an extemporizer on all occasions.

He declares that his mistake in that first sermon was overpreparing in detail. He had written out heads, subdivisions, even some passages or paragraphs in full, that he might be certain to have material enough.

To every sensitive nature the thought of not succeeding is agitating. He who has made a reputation by one method should not jeopard it in a critical hour by trying another radically different. When a mere visitor in Brooklyn Dr. STORRS had little to risk, but in his second sermon almost everything.

Transition in middle life.

A noteworthy instance of renouncing reading for extemporization is that of Dr. WILLIAM R. WILLIAMS, a Baptist clergyman of New York, distinguished by his published writings, and who sustained an eloquence which frequently rose to the sublime, although restricted by the feebleness of his voice. He was settled for fifty years over the same church, and for the first thirty almost uniformly read from the manuscript, but for the last twenty years abandoned it, except when publication was contemplated. As a consequence he was far more eloquent, and his voice, notwithstanding his age, increased in strength. It is credibly reported that when he made his first attempt, on an important occasion, he was so de-

pressed as to apologize for the supposed failure to an intimate friend who had approached to congratulate him on freeing himself from bondage.

A timid minister in a denomination which then made the visible manuscript almost a requisite, and who attained early in life a reputation of which anyone might be proud, was my neighbor. Each week he wrote two sermons in full, and with fine elocutionary effect read them to a congregation growing more and more critical under the influence of his polished periods. His health began to fail, and it was obvious that his strength was waning. Strange depressions overcame him, and one day, in confidential converse born of intimacy, he said: "O, what would I not give to be able to stand up and talk! I could wander in the fields and think out my discourses, as you do, instead of bending over a desk with the blood in my head and no air in my lungs; but I could never learn to do it." In describing his pitiable situation he displayed rare felicity of diction; indeed, had the passage as he delivered it been heard by any congregation, it would have thrilled them. To encourage him I said, "In conversation you are one of the best extemporizers I ever heard; many a time I have known you to utter passages born of the moment which, if spoken in the pulpit, would raise your standing in the estimate of the most admiring auditor."

A slave's wail.

He made a set argument to prove that he could not extemporize in public, again demonstrating that his chief need was confidence. To contribute to this I said, "If you will follow the suggestions that I will give you, in six weeks from to-day you will speak to your congregation extemporaneously, with a force and fervor which will cause them to beseech you never to read another sermon."

The route to freedom.

He consented to make the trial, and the prescription was this: "During your summer outing in the mountains accept the first invitation given you to preach in a schoolhouse. Select a theme with which you are familiar, one that stirs your own heart, and has had intimate relation to your deepest experiences. Meditate upon it, take a large view, mark out some grand divisions, ignore details, think only of what will illustrate your thought—not with the purpose of using any particular illustration, but of filling your mind with appropriate similitudes. Then preach. If ideas fail to come, pause. The people will not be aware that this is not your usual method. TRISTRAM BURGESS, when a member of Congress, fixed his eagle eye upon his opponent and pointed his finger at him, pausing in his speech for a long time. A friend afterward said to him, 'That pause was terrible.' 'Not so terrible to my opponent as it was to me,' replied BURGESS, 'for I did not know what to say next.' But you will have

An unconscious coup d'état.

no difficulty. So soon as you have experienced a full glow of feeling, and discover that your fervor is subsiding, cease. Few find fault with a short discourse."

He acted upon this advice and reported himself encouraged. He was then advised to exchange with some minister at a remote point, and pursue a similar course with his evening sermon. This he did, and though in the morning he read the best discourse he had, to his surprise and indignation his host declared that the evening sermon was much the better of the two. He then proposed to preach to his own congregation the same sermon that he had preached in the schoolhouse. I warned him that this would precipitate a crisis, and advised him that he wait until special religious interest was aroused; meanwhile speaking extempore at the weekly lecture and on funeral and other occasions. This counsel was taken.

Independence achieved.

Some weeks afterward, without a note or a committed phrase, he stood before the church on Sunday morning, making both an argument and an appeal. Instead of being adversely criticised, he was rebuked for concealing his gifts so long. From that time he never used a manuscript, and continued for twenty years one of the best-known and most eloquent ministers in his communion.

The philosophy of these directions was based

upon the fact that he had to gain confidence to meet a critical emergency; that extemporizing, when once the flow is established, is as natural as conversing; and that it is wiser to acquire the art without any helps. To learn to swim by the use of life-preservers is possible, but it is better to learn without them.

While these suggestions were adapted to the peculiar genius of my friend, others might at first find it difficult to avoid wandering or repetition, or even after the meditations of a week, there being nothing recorded in the verbal memory, might seem to themselves utterly unprepared; and conscious of this condition, be unable to confront an audience.

For them a different course will prove effectual. They should divide the proposed address into sections and prepare an outline containing definitions and explanatory observations necessary to clearness, but without illustration or elaboration. This brief should be thoroughly committed to memory. Under each important head the speaker should, without writing, think out something appropriate to say. It need not be much, but should be definite; and as nearly as possible he should recite these ideas to himself, not, however, slavishly confining himself to the letter, but interweaving the different parts with distinctness sufficient to enable him, if necessary,

Stepping-stones.

to recall his intended train. Under no circumstances should he take this brief to the platform.

In delivering the address he should begin with any incidental remark or suggestion that occurs to him appertaining to the subject, the occasion or the audience, or to himself if the circumstances warrant it, and endeavor to proceed without thinking of his brief. In most cases he will encounter little difficulty, and in a few moments will be traveling over the road previously marked out. It will not be like a railway or the macadamized portions of a wide carriage road. He may pass from side to side, often wandering into bypaths, but he will maintain his general direction. As each point is reached, and the subtopic to be discussed is stated, without attempting to repeat anything previously prepared, should he find himself without ideas or becoming embarrassed, he may fall back upon those passages thought out with reference to such an emergency.

A living example.

One of the best-known preachers in the Reformed [Dutch] Church, one who had been confined to the manuscript for many years, adopted this course and still pursues it. He commits to memory his definition and his brief. Although this, while he recites, is not extemporizing, his mental operations are not impeded by the recollection of his topical statements. But he who proposes to acquire this art will find it an advantage

to write less and less with any view of adhering to it. This in substance was the method of Dr. JOHN MCCLINTOCK, a master of a superb written and spoken style, whose eloquence as pastor of the American Chapel in Paris during the civil war in this country delighted all whose native tongue was English, and attracted cultivated foreigners because of his clearness of thought and exquisite choice of words and their pronunciation.

After a short experience the stimulus of being dependent upon the working of one's own mind without the aid of intentional recollection will be found worth more than any drug which affects the nerves, more than any influence of human origin. The orator has learned that the fruits of his prolonged meditation will come forth in suitable words, under laws regulating the verbal signs, accompanied by natural inflections and proper gestures. He will exult in finding himself in the creative mood.

Unsummoned reserves.

Should the novice, however, be unable to trust himself, even after such preparation as this, he may write a discourse in full, and without endeavoring to commit it to memory speak upon the theme, aiming at the same succession of ideas, but careless whether or not he strikes the target. I made this suggestion to a citizen unexpectedly nominated for Congress, and accordingly he prepared several different addresses for the campaign.

packed them in his portmanteau, but never took them out, finding no difficulty in remeditating the subject, and speaking with far greater freedom than when in the habit of memorizing the language.

If he who speaks memoriter desires to become an extemporizer, he should have little difficulty, for he is able at will to commit and deliver. His course should be to improvise the less important parts or those with which he is most familiar. In every address some things must be said which it would be improper to embellish, and to which what is commonly known as the oratorical form of delivery could not be applied without an appearance of bombast, which always diminishes light and shade. Here the reciter may depend upon extemporizing, having the consciousness that at any moment he can return to his prepared material.

Renouncing the memorizing method.

I am aware that Alexander Melville Bell, more than fifty years known in Europe and America as an original investigator and a prolific author upon the science of speech and the principles of elocution, in an address on sermon reading and memoriter delivery, before the students of New College, Edinburgh, stated that "repetition from memory preoccupies the mind with the act of recollection, and gives the speaker no freedom in leaving his mental paper for the utterance of spontaneous

thoughts—which the reader can interpolate without fear of losing the thread of his discourse." In the method here proposed that difficulty will not arise; for his preparation is not wholly in the form of connected paragraphs.

I assume that the declaimer has sufficient self-possession to retard his rate of speech as he approaches the close of the committed paragraph, and, unless he shall have completed the discussion of the idea, on resuming repetition, to proceed at the same rate in which he extemporizes.

The Rev. William Morley Punshon, of England, after having spoken memoriter for the greater part of his life, successfully applied this principle toward the close of his distinguished career as preacher and lecturer, gradually diminishing the recited matter and correspondingly increasing the extemporized.

Four weeks have been found sufficient to relieve some from intolerable bondage.

Within this time freedom was attained by a favorite orator, who had never spoken in public five consecutive minutes without committing the words to memory. Stung by a taunt in debate, he found himself speaking unexpectedly, with a fluency surprising to those who heard him. He thought, "Why cannot I apply the same methods to all public speech?" He made the experiment on an advertised occasion, and escaped fail-

Goaded to self-emancipation.

ure, though not achieving remarkable success. On a second trial, supposing he had failed, he apologized to the congregation, but from every quarter received such commendation that he has since pursued the method which for years he imagined himself utterly disqualified even to attempt.

Those who have reached middle life without speaking in public at all need not be discouraged if occasion requires them to do so, provided their minds are well furnished with ideas, their purpose to succeed is fixed, and their opportunities such as to admit of practicing.

Intoxicated by success.

So easy has it proved for some to become facile extemporizers who long felt that they could never do so that, in the joy of new-found liberty, the delight of congratulations from friends, the incense of increasing audiences, and the discovery that, if necessary, they can speak without preparation, they come to neglect it. They meditate for a little before speaking, and abandon themselves to the flow; or when dull they catch up some ancient manuscript, glance at its pages, seize two or three of its principal ideas, and attempt a speech. In a few years, possibly in a few months, they fall into a mannerism which adheres; they become, if preachers, mere "spin-texts," and discriminating friends suggest a return to the manuscript, but this they are likely to construe into a reflec-

tion upon their genius. Too proud to accept the advice, and not discerning the roots of the difficulty—indolence and conceit—they persist both in speaking without notes and in neglecting preparation. The last state of such men is worse than the first. The precipice of pride.

There is no description of the extemporizer more comprehensive and precise than that given by FÉNELON: "He is a man who is well instructed, and who has a great facility of expressing himself; a man who has meditated deeply in all their bearings the principles of the subject which he is to treat; has conceived that subject in his intellect and arranged his arguments in the clearest manner; has prepared a certain number of striking figures and touching sentiments which may render it sensible and bring it home to his hearers; who knows perfectly all that he ought to say, and the precise place in which to say it, so that nothing remains at the moment of delivery but to find words in which to express himself."

This was the goal which, in his later years, PHILLIPS BROOKS pursued with a success as imposing as his majestic presence.

To the novice in this art the ancient legend on the first and second gates, "Be bold!" should come as a voice of encouragement. But to him who in a brief period has attained unexpected triumph the inscription on the third gate, "Be not too bold!" reveals the secret of permanent success.

CHAPTER XLIII

Ever the Highest Ideal

THE highest ideal of thoughtful and vigorous oratory might reasonably be expected in the two great English-speaking nations.

The government of the United States is republican in form, and among its guarantees to the citizen are freedom of conscience, of speech, and of the press. All subjects in religion and politics are debatable, and therefore in this country there is vast scope for eloquence.

Governmental fostering of free speech.

The government of Great Britain is a limited monarchy, the limitations upon absolute power being so numerous and comprehensive that as large liberty of conscience, of speech, and of the press is enjoyed by the people of that nation as by those of the United States. Both prohibit agitations avowedly designed to promote the overthrow of the national institutions, and forbid the making of public statements derogatory to the reputation of private citizens, or unjustly attacking the prerogatives or characters of representatives of the executive, legislative, or judicial functions, or in any way designed to provoke a breach of the peace. In determining whether the law has been violated there is room for the sharpest distinc-

tions, the most forcible arguments, and the most impassioned oratory.

The prosecution of unpopular reforms is a powerful incentive to the extemporaneous speaker, and as such movements progress the conservative, in defense of what he holds dear, is frequently aroused, and resists the iconoclast with arguments as strongly stated and eloquence burning as his own.

Flaming speech from burning hearts.

Revolutionary periods furnish a broad field for eloquence. The war which gave birth to the United States was preceded by a series of extraordinary oratorical triumphs, and followed by similar achievements, until the thousand times told tale had lost somewhat of its power to charm, especially when temporarily eclipsed by new questions. In the conflicts on the subjugation of the colonies, the right in the issue and the methods to be employed, British oratory reached an elevation not surpassed in the long history of parliamentary debates. For thirty years previous to the late civil war the relation of the States to the Federal government and the rightfulness and expediency of human slavery raised the eloquence of American orators to the highest pitch. This elevation was maintained during and for several years subsequent to that conflict.

Oratory is greatly checked in countries where oppression is sustained by irresistible force; hence MATERNUS exclaims: "Who ever heard of

an orator at Crete or Lacedæmon? In those states a system of rigorous discipline and rigorous laws was established, while Rhodes and Athens, places of popular rule, where all things lay open to all men, swarmed with orators innumerable."* A contrast has often been drawn between the orations of CICERO, spoken before CÆSAR when he was master of the Roman world, in behalf of MARCELLUS and others—in which, what is chiefly to be admired, are delicacy of sentiment and elegance of diction—and the "torrent, tempest, and whirlwind of passion that roused, inflamed, and commanded the senate and the people against CATALINE and MARK ANTONY."

Improves with age.

The English language is unsurpassed among modern languages as an instrument for the highest efforts of the extemporizer.

Language, says WHITNEY, "is the means of expression of thought, an instrument auxiliary to the processes of thought."† It is true that the "tendency to abbreviation for ease, for economy of effort in expression, is a universal and a blind one."‡ "But . . . unless a people is undergoing actual degradation in quantity and quality of mental work, it does not lose what it once possessed in the way of inflectional apparatus without some other and, on the whole, equivalent means of expression."§

* Tacitus, *Dialogue Concerning Orators*, p. 451 (Bohn).
† Whitney, *Life and Growth of Language*, p. 30.
‡ Ibid., p. 106. § Ibid., p. 106, 107.

Although English may have deteriorated in some respects, it has been greatly enriched by new definitions and by multiplication of meaning in old words, by which materials for every desirable variety of liveliness of style are constantly accumulating. Thus the instrument of expression "is continually undergoing alteration for the better by being applied to more varied and defter modes of use." Additions of foreign words are so rapidly made that already nearly five sevenths of the words found in the best dictionaries are derived primarily or secondarily from the classical languages; about two sevenths are native Germanic, and the number of other derivations at the time when WHITNEY wrote was scarcely two thousand. Moreover, new combinations of words constantly enlarge the speaker's resources.

"Finden wordes newe." —*Chaucer.*

Many comparisons have been made among languages with respect to their adaptation to particular purposes. Madame DE STAEL says: "The Italian and the Spanish languages are modulated like a harmonious song, French is eminently adapted for conversation; parliamentary debates and the energy natural to the nation have given to the English language something expressive which makes up for its lack of harmony. German is far more philosophical than Italian, more poetic by its boldness than French, more favorable to rhythmical verse than English, yet it retains a kind

of stiffness which is due, perhaps, to the fact that it has not been very greatly used in society or in public." *

In the time of this brilliant critic French was, and had long been, the language of the courts and the German princes. FREDERICK THE GREAT despised the German language and wrote his works in French.

His disloyalty not admirable.

As to the adaptation of any language to the purposes of the extemporaneous speaker, no one is competent to judge who is not able to think and extemporize with nearly equal facility in the languages compared. Prof. J. H. WORMAN, author of a series of text-books in German, Spanish, French, and Italian, is competent to do this. He states to me sententiously their respective adaptation to such use: "It is easy to extemporize in English because of the simplicity of English structural features; it is as easy in Spanish because of like simplicity of structure, provided a speaker (if not a native) be possessed of the knowledge of Latin. It is difficult to extemporize in German because its structural features are much involved, and almost as difficult to do so in French because of its idiomatic richness."

Some years after General CARL SCHURZ settled in the United States I questioned him as to the relative adaptability of German and English to

* *L'Allemagne*, part ii, chapter 9.

extemporaneous speech. His recognized mastery of the art in either language had already attracted attention, and during the years that have elapsed has given him a fame not surpassed as a writer and speaker in these languages upon the varied themes which have occupied his attention. He emphatically informed me that it is far easier to extemporize correctly in English than in German, assigning, among other reasons, that however one may begin a sentence in English, even should he utter a term that did not suit him, he can extricate himself;—whereas the structure of the German language is such that if one makes the slightest grammatical departure, he must retreat and begin a new sentence. Not wishing to misrepresent him, I wrote to inquire whether I recollected correctly; and received this reply:

An unquestioned expert.

"New York, May 12, 1898.

"My Dear Sir: In reply to your letter of May 9, it gives me pleasure to say that your recollection of our conversation, as to the English and the German languages with reference to extemporaneous public speaking, is substantially correct.

"Very truly yours, C. Schurz."

The French language is more subject to inflexible rules than the English. In general, perhaps, the spirit of French education, more than that of others, tends to develop the ability to

speak readily. Declamation, rhetoric, and extemporaneous reports on certain specified topics form an important part of every Frenchman's education. The art of conversation is probably more assiduously cultivated in France than in any other country. Notwithstanding this, the weight of testimony from experts is that if the same standard of grammatical accuracy be required in the two languages, English is better fitted to public extempore address than French.

Rays from a brilliant orb.

A second volume of the correspondence of VICTOR HUGO has recently been published in Paris, and contains a letter to JULES LACROIX, who had asked the former whether it would be better to translate SHAKESPEARE entirely in Alexandrines or to mingle prose and verse, as in the text. HUGO says: "In the French language there is an abyss between prose and verse; in English there is hardly any difference. It is the magnificent privilege of the 'literary tongues,' Greek, Latin, and French, to possess a prose. This privilege English does not enjoy. There is no prose in English. The genius of the two tongues is, therefore, profoundly distinct in this matter. SHAKESPEARE was able to do in English what he would not have done in French. Follow, therefore, your excellent instinct as poet; do in French what SHAKESPEARE would have done, what CORNEILLE and MOLIÈRE

did. Write homogeneous pieces. That is my opinion."

The dazzling style of VICTOR HUGO sometimes exaggerates his ideas, but the fact that in English prose and poetry glide spontaneously into each other, and that the opposite is the case in French, supports the conclusion that oratory being akin to poetry, fervid improvising speakers will find English a more elastic medium of transmitting ideas and impressions to an audience than French, unless those using the latter tongue are masters.

Tradition credits CHARLES V with having said: "German is the fittest tongue to address horses, French to converse with statesmen, Italian to speak with ladies, English to answer birds, but that Spanish is the only language that ould be used to address kings, princes, and the Almighty."

In Spain, a little learning not a dangerous thing.

I have listened to noble orations in classical Spanish, and merely by the aid of a slight colloquial acquaintance, and the benefit of having translated *Don Quixote*, and the knowledge of Latin, was able to understand them, especially religious discourses, and, when apprised of the subject, could readily follow the debates in the Cortes. Conversation in that country with American missionaries confirmed the view that Spanish has no rival except English as a vehicle for unpremeditated speech.

The well-known Italian "improvisatories," who at a moment's notice orally compose in verse upon any subject assigned them (though some of them have been detected in the use of memoriter passages), are sufficiently well authenticated to demonstrate the adaptability of that language for extemporaneous speech. Their methods are referred to by Madame DE STAEL,* and HANS CHRISTIAN ANDERSEN has a very interesting story upon the subject.

In comparison with these languages I have spoken of the English as the noblest instrument for the greatest number of oratorical purposes.

I do not affirm that the English language is the best medium of expression for every form of oratory; that it is as sonorous, harmonious, or majestic, or as well suited to tragedy or to loud, swelling forms of oratory, such as in the Middle Ages were addressed to kings, princes, and to the Almighty, as is the Spanish. I do not maintain that it is as well suited to polite conversation as the Italian; or as well adapted to scientific distinctions and diplomatic negotiations as the French; or to expression in some kinds of poetry and in metaphysical and philological disquisitions as is the German; but I hold that, in view of what it has lost and what it has gained, for all forms of oratory the English language has no equal.

The tongue of tongues.

In the use of the contents of this ever-expand-

* *Corinne*, book iii, chapter 3.

ing vessel for fermenting thought the safest rule, and the one of most general application, is almost as old as the Christian era: "How faulty is speech, of which the greatest virtue is perspicuity, if it needs an interpreter! Consequently, as the oldest of new words will be the best, so the newest of old words will be the best." *

Having such a self-perfecting instrument of expression and opportunities and incitements unparalleled, the question presents itself: Why is it the universally critical sentiment that English and American eloquence is waning; that, while the number of speakers increases, the number of orators diminishes?

Those who gravely discuss the assumed decline of oratory attribute it chiefly to the influence of the press as a purveyor of information, and a reporter of speeches. In the former function it takes from the orator his monopoly of knowledge. He can no longer surprise or awe a concourse by the first utterance of an important truth or the earliest account of a critical event. Nevertheless, he retains the power to state his own estimate of the value of the fact and of its relation to probable changes. His judgment concerning the application of truth can be ascertained only from his words and acts. According to the confidence the public has in him will be its desire to hear him;

Satiated Athenians.

* *Quintilian*, vol. i, p. 62.

for curiosity concerning what is to come and the sentiments of competent men upon such subjects springs eternal in the popular mind and heart.

By its ability to report or distort speeches the press undoubtedly terrorizes many minds. When such reports are partial or inaccurate the speaker is at a disadvantage; when they are verbatim they may still more embarrass him. Hence many write and commit, with the result of monotony or hesitation in delivery. Others, in constant fear, check themselves at the point where, unrestrained, they might soar instead of crawl.

Self-reliance must have a basis.

As he only who can depend upon his steed to keep the main road, whatever happens, can safely allow him to take the bits in his teeth, so those only who can rely upon their characters and constituencies can afford to risk the "fine frenzy" of genuine free speaking. For they know that the discreet will criticise discreetly, and that the indiscreet and the malicious cannot permanently harm; that the honest listener will be saved by the general drift, and the dishonest hearer will deceive himself whatever may be said.

The orator should regard the press as a co-ordinate power, but under no circumstances consider himself in any sense subordinate. Pitiable is the dejection into which many, who essay to instruct or guide the public mind, are plunged by an adverse criticism, or the subserviency

of others who in public addresses praise even the extravagancies of the press, hoping that by this means, if by no other, they can secure the pleasure of reading the assertion that they are "among the most distinguished and eloquent orators," or of being spoken of as "most eminent citizens."

Tribute to whom tribute is due.

He is blind and ungrateful who underestimates the services of the press to freedom, general education, literature, government, commercial prosperity, and in its more elevated forms, to religion. But oratory can never fulfill its function except when it proceeds from the lips of men so confident in truth, in themselves, and in those who believe in them as to speak as they would were there no "chiel among them taking notes." It is evident that these observations apply to extempore speakers with more force than to those who read or recite; for such, if impeached, are capable of confounding those who misrepresent their utterances.

Apart from the reaction of fear upon the inner springs of eloquence, there is prevalent an unwillingness to be original in the forthgiving of one's own personality. The language of ROSECRANS concerning the Germans was not intended as a satire: "Our early familiarity with books and writing, and our small acquaintance with thinking, especially among the learned class, may account for

our making so little of extemporaneous discourse." Of all orators those who speak extemporaneously can least afford to compile discourses or dispense with original thinking.

Professor TAVERNER, in discussing "The Respective Styles of SHAKESPEARE and BACON, Judged by the Laws of Elocutionary Analysis and Melody of Speech,"* shows the folly of assuming that he who wrote the one could have performed the work incident to the other without entirely new conditions from the start, and that it was even greater nonsense to assume that one could have accomplished the joint works of two.

Individuality of style.

From his comprehensive survey I make these extracts: "But how much more extensive are the combinations that constitute the style, the language, the adornments, the illustrations, the figurative expression, the place of the emphasis, form of the phrases, the source of metaphors, the character of the similes. . . . To make up the characteristics of some of these, what a combination of antecedents! Every day that the author lived, every trouble, happiness, and accident that he experienced, every book that he chanced to read, every study that he earnestly prosecuted, and every virtue and every vice that grew in his character, every trait and bias and inclination in science, in theology, in philosophy, and music,

* Wilkes' *Shakespeare from an American Point of View*, pp. 426 430.

contributed to produce and form the united result. . . . The simile is as a spark that is to be elicited from an electrically charged substance. The moment for the spark has come; it cannot deliberate how it shall deport itself—there is so much of it, or so little, according to circumstances. Thus nothing is so sure an indication of the man.

"When he projects the simile he looks in upon himself. He is confined to nothing. There is the storehouse—a glance only, and he picks up the brightest gem that suits his purpose. Be he rich or poor, parsimonious or prodigal, he must wear robes suited to his state and station."

Worshiping idols of one's own creation.

Such must be the extemporaneous speaker, yet many are not willing such to be. They have a mental model. Blind souls! not to know that this should never be. The relation of one's circulation and respiration to verbal flow, accent, emphasis, and cadence is as intimate to his personality as is his physiognomy; each one, therefore, who lives, moves, and has his oratorial being in this knowledge has an independent charm.

Life is ever fascinating; hence the repetition of the same musical composition by an automatic instrument must lose its charm. RUBINSTEIN and VON BÜLOW when improvising were so characteristic that one familiar with their playing could, if blindfolded, infallibly determine which he heard.

They also vary in their interpretation of the same compositions, not only when compared with each other, but with themselves in rendering the same compositions on different occasions.

It would be more pleasing to hear a *prima donna* sing the same song on ten different occasions than to listen, at various times, to ten reproductions of her tones, even though an ideally perfect phonograph represented her at her best. In like manner the variability of the extemporizer who speaks often to the same audience is a source of permanent interest unless his worst conditions are so inferior as to repel attention.

Amenable to the same law.

This relation of life to action affects equally spoken and written style. It is this which accounts in great part for the blemishes, as well as the virtues, of every great writer and the characteristic diversities of every great speaker. It explains, also, the inability of the half educated to criticise intelligently a genuine orator. They are capable only of identifying his blemishes, and often these are solely the objects of their admiration. The same principle renders independent of adverse criticism the speaker who really "knows himself" so long as the purpose of his effort is fully accomplished. "To thine own self be true, thou canst not then be false to any man," or to any audience.

The practice of dictation for publication and, as is a growing custom, in preparation for extemporaneous speech is hurtful to oratory.

"Nothing new under the sun."

A lecturer recently observed that dictation was wholly unknown to the ancients. A slight familiarity with the epistles of ST. PAUL might have protected him from this error. This subject is treated by QUINTILIAN: "From my disapprobation of carelessness in writing it is clearly enough seen what I think of the fine fancy of dictation; for in the use of the pen the hand of the writer, however rapid, as it cannot keep pace with the celerity of his thoughts, allows them some respite; but he to whom we dictate urges us on, and we feel ashamed at times to hesitate, or stop, or alter, as if we were afraid to have a witness of our weakness. Hence it happens that not only inelegant and casual expressions, but sometimes unsuitable ones, escape us, while our whole anxiety is to make our discourse connected; expressions which partake neither of the accuracy of the writer nor of the animation of the speaker; while, if the person who takes down what is dictated prove, from slowness in writing or from inaccuracy in reading, a hindrance, as it were, to us, the course of our thought is obstructed, and all the fire that had been conceived in our mind is dispelled by delay, or sometimes by anger at the offender." *

* *Quintilian*, vol. ii, p. 288.

What QUINTILIAN says of dictation is as true to-day as when he promulgated it. For, although it is necessary to avail ourselves of the aid of stenography, the ulterior influence of habitual dictation upon the extemporaneous orator is unfavorable. It also depraves the style of one who, though not a speaker, dictates for publication, unless the tendency is foreseen and counteracted.

Source of the evil.

Since his accent, emphasis, and inflections will unconsciously carry part of his thought—if the composer for publication dictates as rapidly as possible—he will be compelled to reconstruct many sentences to avoid being misunderstood, and substitute synonyms for frequent repetitions of the same word.

I have noticed serious deterioration in certain popular authors after they resorted to dictation; some, writers of fiction, others of scientific and historical works.

It is not to those errors which escape the proof-reader that I refer, but to carelessness and enfeebling verbosity, the increase of colloquialisms, and the constant similarity of sentence forms. This is especially apparent if their successive works be compared.

For the writer only.

There are but two ways of preventing these consequences. One is to dictate slowly, remembering that the ideas are to be conveyed through the eye and not chiefly through the ear. The other

is to revise the stenographer's work rigorously. The latter of these methods is preferable for him who aims at accurate, connected, lucid, and animated composition, and at the same time purposes to speak extemporaneously. For if he dictates slowly, he constantly places a restraint upon the combined action of his mind, respiration, and voice. This will result in his becoming a slow, stilted, and perhaps listless speaker.

A legislator who daily for several weeks dictated thus slowly for publication, on resuming his professional duties failed to hold the attention of the presiding officer or his colleagues, and an associate inquired if he were ill. The difficulty was that he was graduating his rate of utterance to the speed of an imaginary stenographer, and reflecting upon how his remarks would look in print. Recognizing the source of trouble, and intensely interested in the issue of the debate, at the next opportunity he rose and plunged into his subject regardless of syntax or orthoepy, and soon carried his audience and his point.

Not a strange experience.

To the writer of sermons and to the memoriter speaker who has long practiced composition with the pen the practice of dictating to stenographers might be a decided improvement, as imperceptibly to themselves their style would assimilate in some degree to that of spoken discourses.

But to the extemporizer who proposes to compose

in preparation it is more beneficial to write than to dictate, for in the latter case he is restricted to words already in his vocabulary; whereas, suspending his writing, he may search carefully for more expressive terms or decide the vexed question of synonyms. He will also prepare the way for an unconscious modification of his sentence-making while speaking. He will find in writing, rather than dictating, a decided advantage in the fact that his voice is not in action, and the writing center being separate from the speaking center, the reflex influence of a slow rate cannot diminish the habitual activity of the brain and nerve elements essential to vocalized speech.

THOMAS CARLYLE in correspondence with GOETHE makes reference to one of his works, the final chapter of which he entitles "Concluded but Not Completed." Such must be the case with discussions of life in any of its countless forms; for it is fatal to improvement or the retention of one's acquisitions if he fancy that he is or will be perfect.

The ideal the measure of growth.

An ever-expanding ideal should go before him like a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night.

No professional orator is worthy the name of master who cannot adapt himself to any occasion.

If he be a minister, and speaking when neither the character, the system, nor the name of his religious communion has any direct bearing, if by

thought, pronunciation, or inflection he is identifiable (unless his dress would indicate it) as a clergyman of any particular denomination, he has much to learn of this art. If a lawyer, and he cannot speak on a scientific, a literary, or a religious topic without revealing that he is a member of the bar, he is a slave rather than a free man.

When addressing a meeting in the interest of some philanthropy or commercial enterprise, and by a lapse of the tongue or the mind a lawyer exclaims, "Gentleman of the jury," or pads his speech with the repetitions, conjunctive phrases, and parenthetical remarks common to his profession, he merits the ridicule encountered by a once prominent minister elected to the Legislature, when in a speech advocating a new railroad he forgot himself and exclaimed, "These, my beloved brethren, are solemn realities!"

Never should the extemporaneous speaker voluntarily sink in thought or expression. The purpose at which he aims may be different on one occasion from that which governs him on another, but the whole man should be put into each effort. It is the corresponding pettiness of many on what they consider trivial occasions which prevents them from being able to rise above the same level when they would reach a lofty altitude.

The man greater than matter or manner.

There is neither time nor place in public speaking for the relaxation of the faculties. As well

might the musician say, "I care not how I sing this," or the painter work upon a voluntarily imperfect conception or execute a perfect conception listlessly. None should speak upon any subject in which he is so little interested that he could not spend hours in meditating upon it, not noting the flight of time.

"Wisdom is justified of her children."

A responsibility rests upon every person of culture who essays extemporaneous oratory to elevate it in public regard, to make it impossible for ranters, gossipers, or dullards to gain consideration; to hold up such a standard that a voluntary falling below it will evoke condemnation. To do this he must so magnify the theme that whenever he speaks his soul will expand until he and his hearers will feel that the occasion is of transcendent dignity.

The orator should to the last day of his life scrutinize and antagonize his defects, ever remembering that the fruits of discipline are evanescent, never contented unless the audience on each occasion has been his; if not at once wholly, yet progressively and finally.

A single principle stated by the matchless Prentiss, and made the rule of his life, if adopted and applied by every extemporaneous speaker, would, in a decade, restore all the charm that oratory has lost:

Finis.

"IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO SPEAK TOO WELL TO ANY AUDIENCE."

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